# *Ammianus after Julian*

## THE REIGN OF VALENTINIAN AND VALENS IN BOOKS 26-31 OF THE *RES GESTAE*

*Edited by*
J. DEN BOEFT, J.W. DRIJVERS,
D. DEN HENGST & H.C. TEITLER

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# Ammianus after Julian

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November 2006
JdB, JWD, DdH, HCT

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| *AA* | *Archäologischer Anzeiger* |
| *AB* | *Analecta Bollandiana* |
| *AC* | *L'Antiquité Classique* |
| *AE* | *L'Année Épigraphique* |
| *AHB* | *The Ancient History Bulletin* |
| *AJAH* | *American Journal of Ancient History* |
| *AncSoc* | *Ancient Society* |
| *ANRW* | *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* |
| *AntTard* | *Antiquité Tardive* |
| *ASNP* | *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* |
| *BAGB* | *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* |
| *BSL* | *Bollettino di Studi Latini* |
| *ByzZ* | *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* |
| *CAH* | *Cambridge Ancient History* |
| *CLE* | *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* |
| *CIL* | *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* |
| *CPh* | *Classical Philology* |
| *CQ* | *Classical Quarterly* |
| *CS* | *Critica storica* |
| CSCO | Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium |
| CSEL | Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum |
| GCS | Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte |
| *GRBS* | *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* |
| HdAW | Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft |
| *HZ* | *Historische Zeitschrift* |
| *ILCV* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres* |
| *ILS* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* |
| *IRT* | *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* |
| *JbAC* | *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* |
| *JECS* | *Journal of Early Christian Studies* |
| *JHS* | *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* |
| *JÖByz* | *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* |
| *JRS* | *The Journal of Roman Studies* |
| *LCM* | *Liverpool Classical Monthly* |
| *MD* | *Materiali e Discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* |
| *MEFRA* | *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Section Antiquité* |
| MGH AA | Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi |
| *MH* | *Museum Helveticum* |
| *OLD* | *Oxford Latin Dictionary* |
| PG | Patrologia Graeca |

| | |
|---|---|
| PL | Patrologia Latina |
| *PLRE* | *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* |
| PO | Patrologia Orientalis |
| *PP* | *La Parola del Passato* |
| *QC* | *Quaderni Catanesi di Studi classici e medievali* |
| *RAC* | *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* |
| *RE* | *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* |
| *REL* | *Revue des Études Latines* |
| *RFIC* | *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* |
| *RhM* | *Rheinisches Museum* |
| *RIC* | *Roman Imperial Coinage* |
| *RICM* | *Recueil des Inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du IIIe au VIe siècle* |
| *RSA* | *Rivista storica dell'Antichità* |
| SC | Sources Chrétiennes |
| *SO* | *Symbolae Osloenses* |
| *TAPA* | *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* |
| TLL | Thesaurus Linguae Latinae |
| *VChr* | *Vigiliae Christianae* |
| *YR* | *The Yale Review* |
| *ZAC* | *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* |
| *ZPE* | *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* |

# INTRODUCTION

The Dutch project to write commentaries on the eighteen preserved books of Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae* reached a high point with the appearance of the commentary on book 25 in the spring of 2005. Dr P. de Jonge, the founder of the project, dealt with books 14–19. In 1983, when he called it a day because of his advanced age, he was succeeded by a team of younger compatriots, at first a trio, but from 1991 a quadriga, which set to work on the middle part of the *Res Gestae*. The individual commentaries were published at intervals of three or four years. Book 20 appeared in 1987 and book 25, as said, in 2005. The objective of the series was and still is to comment on all aspects of Ammianus' work, an ambition which is expressed in the title 'Philological and Historical Commentary'.

Books 20–25 are mainly concerned with Julian's rise to supreme power, his brief reign as sole emperor, his untimely death during the ill-starred Persian campaign and finally the eight-month rule of his successor Jovian. In every book Julian is the undisputed protagonist. Although being far from uncritical towards his character and policies, and indeed here and there passing a scathing verdict on some of his decisions, the author pictures the emperor as an example of true leadership. As a clear contrast Jovian's short period indirectly confirms this exemplary role.

The last hexad of the *Res Gestae* deals with the reign of the Pannonian emperors, Valentinian and Valens, and covers a period of fourteen years, more than five times longer than the second hexad. Right at the beginning, in a succinct, but firmly worded preface the author explains that his project will take a new turn. He does not explicitly refer to Julian, but it is of course evident that his disappearance and his substitution by rulers of an entirely different type has huge consequences. The considerable difference in chronological scale and structure in combination with the absence of an admired central figure gives books 26–31 their own distinct character.

The appearance of the commentary on the final 'Julianic' book inspired the commentators to invite a group of international specialists in Late Antiquity to partake in a conference. A comparable conference had taken place in 1991 on the occasion of the publication of the

commentary on book 21. The papers were published in *Cognitio gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*. For the conference of 2–5 June 2005 at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Wassenaar it was decided not to look back to what had been achieved in the commentary project, but to look forward to the third hexad and its description of the period after Julian.

The thirteen papers in this volume are arranged in three categories: I. *History and Historiography*, II. *Literary Composition*, III. *Crisis of Empire*. The first category comprises six papers, the second four and the third three.

Bruno Bleckmann studies the relevant evidence in late Greek and Byzantine authors and compares the tradition which is manifest in their works with the text of Ammianus. The resemblances show that the author definitely availed himself of written sources for his description of the events of which he was an eyewitness. He may well have consulted archives and interviewed participants, but the importance of this primary material should not be overrated. Hartmut Leppin argues that Ammianus' report on the accession of Valentinian and Valens is an ironic adaptation of the 'official' view, which is reflected in the laudatory versions of some church historians. Another remarkable aspect of Ammianus' presentation of the Pannonian emperors is his insistence on their low origin, which may well be a reflection of their own representation as men with experience in everyday working life. In Hans Teitler's view there can be no doubt that Ammianus criticizes Valentinian abundantly, but the accusation that he contrived a maliciously distorted portrait and purposely underrated his merits is neither supported by the general narrative nor the necrology of the emperor. Surveying the evidence for Valentinian's religious policy in general, David Hunt deals with Ammianus' well-known commendation of the emperor's tolerance in this field. This should be read in the context of the increasing intransigence from the regime of Theodosius the Great. Noel Lenski re-examines the chronology of Rome's affairs on the eastern frontier during Valens' reign. On the basis of information provided by Ammianus and other sources Lenski presents a revised chronology for Rome's dealings with Persia, Armenia, Iberia and the Saracens for the years 364–378. Jan Willem Drijvers shows that Ammianus' report on the revolt of Firmus leaves much to be desired where chronological and geographical information is concerned. The length of the account aims to evoke Sallust's monograph on the Jugurthine war and Tacitus' report of the Tacfarinas affair. The historian's narrative of Theodosius

the Elder's methods of suppression indicates his critical assessment of this commander's actions.

Daniël den Hengst deals with the literary aspects and the place of the second Roman satire within the *Res Gestae*. Thematic correspondences with Juvenal are clear, but verbal allusions are very scarce. Instead, some comparisons with Lucian's Menippean satires bring to light a far greater likeness. For Ammianus satire was not a genre from the distinct past, but a style of writing practised by contemporaries. Stéphane Ratti interprets the crossing of the Danube by a group of Visigoths in light of the topos of 'the hero crossing a river' and argues that the barbarians' effort is a poor and un-heroic feat when compared to the topos mentioned: the Goths lacked all semblance of heroism. A 'Plutarchean' collection of comparative examples from Greek and Roman history is used by Giuseppe Zecchini for several conclusions, such as Ammianus' emphasis on the common heritage of Greeks and Romans in rhetoric, the absence of politico-military inferiority of the Greeks and their superiority in astronomy and law. Gavin Kelly analyses the often discussed sphragis at the end of the *Res Gestae*. He detects a tension between the author's hope that qualified successors will continue his work in the same grandiose manner and his warning that events after Theodosius' accession in fact require panegyric treatment. Another problem consists in the fact that the closure of book 31 coincides with Valens' death, but not with any solution of the Gothic problem.

Sigrid Mratschek notices the atmosphere of tragedy in Ammianus' handling of the conflict between the *comes Africae* Romanus and Theodosius the Elder. The Lady Iustitia fails in her duty, but the historian takes over and, raising the curtain on the political stage, unmasks the clique of Theodosius' enemies. In this way literature and politics find themselves amalgamated in historiography. Christopher Kelly focuses on the magic and treason trials in Rome and Antioch. Ammianus' ambiguous and disjointed report of these events is deliberate, in that he wants to convey something of the cruel and destructive uncertainty which is destined for those who have to live under a whimsical autocratic rule. Jan den Boeft notes that in the final hexad authorial comments have considerably increased, most markedly in the form of moral verdicts. This poses the problem of moralising historiography as such: if crime abounds and pays, people may draw their conclusion and act accordingly; on the other hand the author's warnings may result in the reader's irritation. The paper ends with a fictive interview with Ammianus, in which the historian explains his basic convictions.

The editors are grateful to the authors for their stimulating papers, which are important contributions to research on Ammianus and the period of Valentinian and Valens, and will prove to be of great value for their work on future commentaries.

Jan den Boeft
Jan Willem Drijvers
Daniël den Hengst
Hans Teitler

# I

# HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

# VOM TSUNAMI VON 365 ZUM MIMAS-ORAKEL: AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS ALS ZEITHISTORIKER UND DIE SPÄTGRIECHISCHE TRADITION

Bruno Bleckmann

*Abstract*: There are striking parallels between books 26–31 of Ammianus' *Res Gestae* and historical works from the Late Greek and Byzantine periods, e.g. in the description of the tsunami of 365 and the oracles predicting the death of Valens. The explanation for these parallels must be that the Byzantine sources and Ammianus made use independently of material in the form of literary historiography. This in turn casts doubts on the currently prevailing view that at least in his account of contemporary events Ammianus, like Thucydides, made use of primary material only.

## I. *Ammian, Theophanes und Georgios Monachos: Die Darstellung des Tsunami von 365*

In einem großen, fast zeitgleich mit den bekannten Ereignissen vom 26. Dezember 2004 erschienenen Aufsatz hat sich Gavin Kelly mit der Beschreibung des großen Tsunami durch Ammian (26.10.15–19) beschäftigt.[1] Kelly kommt zu dem bemerkenswerten Ergebnis, daß Ammian in seiner Darstellung der Ereignisse von 365 großenteils von einer erzählenden Quelle abhängt, die letztlich auch dem Bericht später byzantinischer Quellen zugrundeliegt, nämlich dem Bericht des Theophanes und des Georgios Monachos.

Die Passagen seien in (möglichst genauer) deutscher Übersetzung vorgestellt. Ammian bietet folgende Darstellung:

> Als dieser Umstürzler noch lebte, über dessen vielfältige Taten und über dessen Untergang wir berichtet haben, verbreiteten sich über den gesamten Umfang des Erdkreises plötzlich grauenerregende Schrecken von einer Art, welche uns weder die Mythen noch die wahrheitsmäßigen Altertümer bezeugen. Kurze Zeit nach Tagesanbruch erzitterte nämlich die gesamte Festigkeit der irdischen Gewichtsmasse, nachdem zuvor Blitze in dichter Folge überaus heftig geschleudert worden waren,

[1] Gavin Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', *JRS* 94 (2004) 141–167.

> und sie wurde heftig erschüttert. Das Meer wurde, indem die Fluten nach hinten rollten, zerstreut und wich zurück, so daß der Schlund der Tiefen aufgedeckt wurde und vielgestaltige Arten schwimmender Wesen, die im Schlamm hingen, gesehen wurden und die ungeheuren Ausdehnungen von Tälern und Gebirgen, welche die erste Schöpfung unter ungeheure Strudel verbannt hatte, damals, wie zu glauben gegeben wurde, zu den Strahlen der Sonne hinaufsahen. Als also viele Schiffe gleichsam den trockenen Boden berührten und sehr viele frei durch kleine Reste der Wasserwogen umherstreiften, damit sie mit den Händen Fische und ähnliches sammelten, erhoben sich im Gegenzug die dröhnenden Meereswogen gleichsam in Empörung über die Vertreibung, schlugen gewaltsam über brodelnde Untiefen gegen die Inseln und gegen ausgedehnte Strecken des Festlandes und machten unzählige Gebäude in den Städten und dort, wo sie auch immer sonst zu finden sind, dem Erdboden gleich. So wurde, als die Zwietracht der Elemente wütete, die Beschaffenheit der Welt verborgen und bot Anblicke von Wundern dar. Denn die Masse der Fluten fiel wieder zurück, als es überhaupt nicht erwartet wurde, und tötete und ertränkte viele tausend Menschen. Einige Schiffe, die durch den beschleunigten Strudel der zurückfließenden Wogen zugrunde gegangen waren, wurden später, als die Schwellung der stürmischen Masse erschlafft war, erblickt, und die vom Schiffbruch entseelten Körper lagen auf dem Rücken oder mit dem Gesicht nach unten umher. Andere gewaltige Schiffe wurden von den wütenden Windböen herausgerissen und landeten auf den Firsten der Dächer, wie es in Alexandrien geschah. Und einige wurden fast bis zum zweiten Meilenstein vom Strand weggewirbelt. Zum Beispiel haben wir im Vorbeigehen ein lakonisches Schiff bei der Stadt Mothone gesehen, das durch lang andauernde Fäulnis zerfiel.[2]

Theophanes berichtet in seiner im 8. Jahrhundert verfaßten Chronik folgendes:

> Im gleichen Jahr hielt sich der Kaiser Valens in Markianopel in Moesien auf. Ein großes Erdbeben ereignete sich in der ganzen Welt in der siebten Indiktion des Nachts, so daß auch in Alexandreia Schiffe, die am Strande ankerten, in die Höhe gehoben wurden und die hohen Gebäude und die Mauern überstiegen und daß ferner die Schiffe nach innen in die Höfe und auf die Dächer versetzt wurden. Als aber das Meer zurückgewichen war, blieben sie auf dem Trockenen. Die Volksmassen, die wegen des Erdbebens aus der Stadt geflohen waren, sahen die Schiffe auf dem Festland und liefen herbei, um die Lasten auf den Schiffen auszuplündern. Und als dann das Wasser kehrt machte, verhüllte es alle. Andere Seeleute aber berichteten, daß sie zu jener Zeit gerade, als sie mitten auf der Adria fuhren, überrascht wurden und daß das Schiff

[2] 26.10.15–19. Für eine eingehende Diskussion zum richtigen Verständnis der Ammian-Passage danke ich D. den Hengst.

> plötzlich auf dem Meer auf Grund gesetzt wurde. Kurze Zeit später aber sei das Wasser wiederum zurückgekehrt und sie seien so wieder gefahren.[3]

Die Erzählung des Georgios Monachos, der seine Chronik im 9. Jahrhundert verfaßte, lautet:

> Um jene Zeit ereignete sich ein großes und sehr furchteinflößendes Erdbeben, so daß in Alexandreia das Meer über eine weite Strecke zurückging und daß die Schiffe gleichsam auf dem Trockenen liegend gefunden wurden. Als eine Menge Volk zusammengelaufen war, um das unerwartete Wunder zu betrachten, kehrte das Wasser wieder zurück und lief weit über die gewohnten Örtlichkeiten hinaus, und es wurden 50.000 Menschen ertränkt. Die dort verankerten Schiffe verhüllte das Wasser, die Schiffe, die im Nil angetroffen wurden, riß der Fluß auf das Festland mit gewaltigem Schwung bis auf 180 Stadien weit. Aber auch die meisten Gegenden von Kreta, Achaia, Boiotien, Epirus und Sizilien wurden um diese Zeit zugrundegerichtet, als das Meer hinaufstieg. Und viele Schiffe wurden, als das Meer anschwoll, 100 Stadien weit auf die Gebirge geschleudert, und die Britannischen Inseln und diejenigen Afrikas erduldeten das Gleiche und Schlimmeres, und von den am Meer gelegenen Gebieten fast des gesamten Erdkreises wurden die einen von den Erderschütterungen, die anderen vom Meer versenkt. Und sogar in den Abgründen und in den großen Meeren rund um die Adria und die Ägäis wichen das Meer und die meisten übrigen Dinge zurück, und die Wassermassen standen wie eine Mauer an der einen und der anderen Seite auseinander, und das Trockene trat zutage. Und zu dieser Zeit wurden viele einherfahrende Schiffe überrascht und auf den Boden niedergesetzt. Dann wurden sie wieder flott gemacht durch die Rückversetzung des Wassers. Da es ununterbrochene und schnell aufeinanderfolgende Erdbeben gab, fiel die eine Stadt Bithyniens ganz zusammen sowie die im Umkreis angeordneten Teile der Vorstädte, die Landgebiete und die meisten Bauwerke. Die Germe benannte Stadt des Hellesponts rutschte insgesamt ganz von den Fundamenten herab. Und zusätzlich zu diesen Dingen öffneten sich viele Spalten an verschiedenen Orten, so daß die Menschen aus Furcht in den Bergen blieben. So kamen aufgrund des Wassermangels viele Tiere und Menschen ums Leben.[4]

Kelly hat nun nicht nur auf wörtliche Beziehungen zwischen Ammian und den späten griechischen Erzählungen hingewiesen,[5] die es aus-

---

[3] Theophan. *Chron.* p. 56,9–21 de Boor.

[4] Georg. Mon. p. 560,9–561,18 de Boor-Wirth.

[5] Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 147–155. In der reichhaltigen Literatur zum 21. Juli 365 sind diese Bezüge kaum oder nicht gewürdigt: René Rebuffat, ‚Cuicul, le 21 juillet 365', *Antiquités Africaines* 15 (1980) 309–328 (Seite 322, ohne Erwähnung von Georgios Monachos); F. Jacques, B. Bousquet, ‚Le raz de marée du 21 juillet 365',

schließen, daß die inhaltlichen Berührungen bloßer Zufall sind. Ausgeschlossen ist auch, daß Theophanes oder Georgios über welche Vermittlung auch immer Ammianstoff benutzt haben.[6] Für die historiographische Technik Ammians ist es nun von großem Interesse zu untersuchen, in welcher Form Ammian das Material abgewandelt hat, das sich in der Grundquelle der byzantinischen Autoren befunden haben muß.

Theophanes und Georgios Monachos halten vom Tsunami von 365 in der Hauptsache zwei lokale Ereignisse fest: 1.) wird über die Auswirkungen des Tsunami in Alexandreia berichtet: Durch die Flut werden in Alexandreia Schiffe ans Festland gespült, und zwar über die Mauern in Höfe und auf die Dächer (Theophanes). Die Flut weicht zurück, Schiffe sitzen auf dem trockenen Land fest. Als die Flutwelle zurückkehrt, begräbt sie Tausende von Menschen, die entweder als Plünderer (Theophanes) oder als Schaulustige (Georgios) zu den Schiffen gelaufen waren; 2.) geht es um Ereignisse in der Adria. Dort sitzen Seeleute, als sich die See sehr weit zurückgezogen hat, plötzlich auf dem Trockenen fest. Als die See zurückkehrt, werden die Schiffe wieder flott.

Kelly hat richtig erkannt, daß Ammian beide Grundelemente, aus denen sich die Erzählung der byzantinischen Autoren zusammensetzt, offenkundig umgekehrt hat.[7] Zunächst findet sich bei Ammian eine lange Beschreibung mit plastischen Details (etwa die am Meeresgrund freigelegten Meerestiere, die im Schlamm zappeln). Diese Details sind nur zu erklären, wenn es sich um Phänomene handelt, die nicht an der Küste, sondern auf hoher See beobachtet worden sind. Sie ist also mit der Adria-Episode (2.) in Verbindung zu bringen, auch wenn der

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*MEFRA* 96 (1984) 423–461; M. Henry, ‚Le témoignage de Libanius et les phénomènes sismiques du IVe siècle de notre ère: Essai d'interprétation', *Phoenix* 39 (1985) 36–61; Gerhard Baudy, ‚Die Wiederkehr des Typhon. Katastrophen-Topoi in nachjulianischer Rhetorik und Annalistik: zu literarischen Reflexen des 21. Juli 365 n. Chr.', *JbAC* 35 (1992) 47–82; Gerhard Waldherr, ‚Die Geburt der „kosmischen Katastrophe". Das seismische Großereignis am 21. Juli 365 n. Chr.', *Orbis Terrarum* 3 (1997) 169–201.

[6] So Rebuffat, ‚Cuicul, le 21 juillet 365', 322–323. Dagegen Kelly ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 151–152 mit Anm. 60. Für die Annahme einer Abhängigkeit des Theophanes von Ammian fehlen zu viele spezifische Details, die sich bei den Byzantinern finden, beim spätantiken Autor, abgesehen davon, daß die Rezeption eines sehr kompliziert formulierenden lateinischen Autors durch mittelbyzantinische Chronisten so gut wie ausgeschlossen werden kann. Zur Frage, auf welchen Wegen spätlateinische Texte bei byzantinischen Chronisten Eingang gefunden haben, siehe bereits Bruno Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras* (München 1992) 410, mit Anm. 59.

[7] Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 153–154.

spezifische Hinweis auf die Adria fehlt. Die bei Theophanes und Georgios Monachos als erstes beschriebene Episode (1.) über Ereignisse in Alexandreia wird bei Ammian nur mit wenigen, aber sehr spezifischen Details (den Schiffen auf dem Dach; der Lokalisierung in Alexandreia) gewürdigt: *ingentes aliae naves extrusae rabidis flatibus culminibus insidere tectorum, ut Alexandriae contigit.*[8]

Daß Ammian die Darstellung des Tsunami von 365 zum schriftstellerischen Bravourstück ausgestaltet hat, ist unbestritten. Kelly hebt die Qualität der Erzählung Ammians hervor, die durch die Ausklammerung zu konkreter geographischer Angaben ein gewissermaßen universales Profil gewinnt: ‚The narrative was wrested away from its origins, to become, paradoxically, at once more rational and more universalizing'.[9] Dabei würdigt Kelly den Bericht Ammians als Produkt eines überlegenen Spiels, in dem der Autor Elemente der Autopsie mit intertextuellen Elementen und Anspielungen kombiniert und in dem der Autor die ‚superiority of his expertise' zeigt. Den Althistoriker zwingt diese Einsicht freilich zum vorsichtigen Umgang mit dem Text Ammians. Denn die hochdramatische Darstellung Ammians spiegelt—wie die Bezüge zu den byzantinischen Schriftstellern zeigen—eben nicht, wie früher bereitwillig angenommen, die ‚vivacité de témoignages recueillis de première main'[10] wider, sondern allenfalls gestalterische poetische Fähigkeiten, die Ammian mehr in die Nähe des Duris von Samos als in diejenige des Thukydides rücken. Der Althistoriker kann nicht übersehen, daß die konsequent und permanent angewandte poetische Technik Ammians nicht an sich zur Steigerung des Werts seiner Aussagen führt.[11]

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[8] Henry, ‚Le témoignage de Libanius et les phénomènes sismiques', 40 erklärt die Ähnlichkeiten zwischen Ammian und der spätgriechischen Tradition noch anders: ‚Ce qui n'était qu'anecdote en fin de récit chez Ammien Marcellin occupe la première place dans les narrations postérieures'. Es ist aber wohl eher so, daß Ammian eine existierende reichhaltige Tradition, die bei den Byzantinern überlebt hat, auf ein besonders sprechendes, seine dichterische Ader ansprechendes Detail reduziert hat.

[9] Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 154. Siehe ferner Ibid., 160: ‚The disaster is not only made unique, but also, in several senses, universal. The earthquake shakes the whole world. Until the very end, the narrative is geographically unfixed; not only are no place-names given, but the perspective constantly shifts. Ammianus presents a series of fragmentary and changing images.'

[10] Henry, ‚Le témoignage de Libanius et les phénomènes sismiques', 39.

[11] Nach Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 155 ist der Bericht Ammians trotz seiner rhetorischen Überformung für den modernen Leser zutreffender als derjenige der byzantinischen Chronisten: ‚Ammianus offers a dramatized, rhetorical, and

Die byzantinischen Quellen beschreiben zumindest partiell Dinge, die den beobachtbaren Realitäten von Tsunamis entsprechen: In Alexandreia haben große Teile der Bevölkerung nach dem Erdbeben aus Angst ihre Häuser verlassen. Die Tsunamikatastrophe beginnt mit einem (sicher in übertriebener Form dargestellten) Ansteigen des Meerespiegels. Anschließend zieht sich das Meer weit zurück und kehrt schließlich mit ungeheuer zerstörerischer Wucht zurück. Richtig beschrieben ist auch, daß der Tsunami die Flußmündung aufwärts weit in das Landesinnere hinaufsteigt.[12] Auch die für die Adria beschriebene Trockenlegung ist für flache Gewässerzonen vorstellbar. Die Flucht der Bevölkerung in landeinwärts gelegene Gebirge, wo die Verpflegung sehr schwierig wird, hat in den jüngsten Ereignissen ebenfalls eine Parallele gefunden.

Ammian hat dagegen die Elemente seiner Quelle zu einem hochdramatischen Szenario verbunden und aus den auf wenige Lokalitäten beschränkten Angaben seiner Quelle eine universale Katastrophe von kosmischen Ausmaßen gemacht. Dem Erdbeben gehen zahlreiche Blitze voraus. Das Zurückfluten des Meeres legt ganze Gebirgszüge und Täler frei. Malerisch ausgeführt wird das Schauspiel der zwischen Pfützen einherspazierenden Menschen, die die im Schlamm zappelnden Meeresbewohner sammeln. Die Meeresfluten wüten, nachdem sie zunächst vertrieben worden sind und den Meeresboden freigelegt haben, an Land und tragen so zu einem Bild einer gründlich verkehrten Welt bei, in der die Elemente miteinander ringen: Die See wird zuerst zu Land, und dann das Land zur See.

Dabei scheint mir der Zugriff auf das Quellenmaterial, den man bei Ammian feststellen kann, konventioneller zu sein, als von Kelly und anderen angenommen wird. Kelly trägt einerseits wertvolle Beobachtungen zusammen, um das Bild von Ammian als einem thukydideischen Sammler von Primärmaterial gründlich zu revidieren und nähert sich insofern der traditionellen, seit Thompson und Matthews längst

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elusive account of the tsunami, which nevertheless maintains for modern readers the semblance of comprehension and balance, in contrast to other sources.‘

[12] Jacques, Bousquet, ‚Le raz de marée du 21 juillet 365‘, 449, halten die bei Georgios Monachos wiedergegebenen Zahlen für völlig unglaubwürdig. Der Tsunami steigt die Flußmündung 180 Stadien, also über 40 km, weit auf, und es werden in Alexandreia 50.000 Menschen getötet. Die Zahlen sind übertrieben, aber von ihren Dimensionen eben nicht jenseits jeder Wahrscheinlichkeit, da Tsunamis auf jeden Fall in Flußmündungen verheerende Wirkungen entfalten.

vergessen geglaubten Quellenforschung an.[13] Andererseits distanziert er sich von dieser Methode[14] und betont deutlich, daß die von Ammian benutzte Tradition allenfalls lokalgeschichtlichen Charakter hat, daß es sich nur um Informationsfragmente handelt, möglicherweise um bloße mündliche Erzählungen,[15] die dann irgendwann auch in die alexandrinische Chronistik Eingang fanden und von dort aus in die Darstellungen des Theophanes und Georgios Monachos. Ammian hätte damit ein Profil, das ihn vielleicht nicht Thukydides, aber zumindest Herodot angleicht, dessen Werk aus festgefügten, permanent wiederholten Erzähltraditionen patchworkartig zusammengefügt war.

## II. *Die Beziehungen zur nacheusebianischen Kirchengeschichte*

Bei dieser Betrachtungsweise wird freilich ausgeklammert, daß sich die Provenienz der mit Ammian parallelen Notiz des Theophanes über den Tsunami durchaus bestimmen läßt. Die Beziehungen, die zwischen Theophanes und anderen späten Quellen existieren, weisen eindeutig auf den bekannten von Battifol und Bidez rekonstruierten homöischen Kirchenhistoriker hin.[16] Dieser Kirchenhistoriker ist mit Sicherheit aus den Übereinstimmungen zwischen dem *Chronicon Paschale*, Theophanes und syrischem Material, nämlich der Chronik des Michael Syrus aus dem 12. Jahrhundert,[17] zu rekonstruieren. Es handelt sich um eine Quelle, mit der immer wieder auch die Fastennotizen in der Chronik des Hieronymus und beim Kirchenhistoriker Sokrates in Verbindung zu bringen sind.[18] Für den Tsunami von 365 fehlen zwar Parallelen

[13] E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969); John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989).

[14] Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 149: ‚This is not a conventional piece of source criticism.'

[15] Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 151.

[16] Vgl. dazu nur Joseph Bidez (ed.), *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte. Mit dem Leben des Lucian von Antiochien und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen*, 3. bearbeitete Auflage von F. Winkelmann (Berlin 1981; 1. Auflage 1913) CLI–CLXIII und Anhang VII. Vgl. H.C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche* (Tübingen 1998) 93–95; H.C. Brennecke, ‚Probleme einer Fragmenten-Edition', *ZAC* 8 (2004) 88–106, bes. 102–104. Erster Nachweis bei Henry M. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism* (Cambridge 1882) 216ff.

[17] Jean-Baptiste Chabot (ed.), *Chronique de Michel le Syrien patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)*, Bd. 2 (Paris 1901).

[18] Das bedeutet freilich nicht, daß der homöische Anonymus nur eine Chronik mit knappen Notizen bot, wie jetzt Peter van Nuffelen, ‚Socrate de Constantinople et les

beim *Chronicon Paschale*, dafür ist aber der hier zu berücksichtigende Text des Michael Syrus ungewöhnlich detailliert:[19]

> Jener Valens war aber nach Ägypten gegangen, und als er in Markianopolis war, brach ein Erdbeben aus, wie es es von den Tagen der Welt an nicht ähnlich gegeben hatte. Das Meer wurde wild bewegt und warf die Schiffe über die Mauern der Stadt, und sie fielen nach innen in die Höfe. Und das Meer ließ *seinen* Ort zurück, und das Trockene kam zu Tage, und die Schiffe blieben losgelöst. Und das Volk kam zusammen zum Raub, und das Meer kehrte über sie hinweg wieder zurück und begrub sie. Es berichteten aber die Seeleute, daß auch im Adriatischen Meer das wiederum geschehen sei. Und das Meer wurde bewegt, trat viele Meilen auf das Festland hinaus und bedeckte die Gaue und ihre Einwohner. Und der ganze Grund trat trocken hervor, und die Schiffe fielen an Land, und die Menschen dazwischen waren in Verwunderung. Und sofort kehrte das Meer wieder zurück. Und die Schiffe wurden über das Meer gehoben und schwammen, und die Menschen wurden in keiner Weise verletzt.

In drei Punkten stimmt der Bericht des Michael Syrus deutlicher mit Ammian überein als die anscheinend den homöischen Kirchenhistoriker stark kürzende Darstellung des Theophanes:[20] 1.) verweist Michael Syrus darauf, daß der Tsunami von 365 ein Geschehen von einer Dimension gewesen sei, die vorher noch nie wahrgenommen worden sei. In der lateinischen Übersetzung heißt es: *cui a diebus mundi non evenerat similis*. Den gleichen Gedanken drückt Ammian (26.10.15) folgendermaßen aus: *quales nec fabulae nec veridicae nobis antiquitates exponunt*;[21] 2.) weist Michael Syrus deutlicher als Theophanes darauf hin,

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chroniques', *JÖByz* 54 (2004) 53–73, bes. 66–67 mit Anm. 47 annimmt. Auch die von Richard W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography* (Stuttgart 1999) vertretene These, es sei aus dem seit Gwatkin bekannten Material eine besondere, bis 350 reichende nizänische Fortsetzung Eusebs zu konstruieren, überzeugt nicht. Für unseren Zusammenhang ist die Fragestellung aber ohnehin unerheblich, weil auch Burgess für die Zeit ab 350 von der Existenz eines homöischen Kirchenhistorikers ausgeht.

[19] Wiedergegeben ist der Text als Übersetzung der lateinischen Übersetzung von M. Kugener bei Bidez, *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte*, Anhang VII 43a, p. 239. Die dort benutzten griechischen Ausdrücke weisen lediglich auf wörtliche Übereinstimmungen zwischen Michael Syrus und Theophanes hin.

[20] Daß Theophanes und Michael Syrus voneinander unabhängige Zeugen des anonymen Homöers sind, wird von Jacques, Bousquet, ‚Le raz de marée du 21 juillet 365', 460, Anm. 24 ignoriert.

[21] Für die Formel ‚wie es nie zuvor gewesen ist noch je sein wird' führt Klaus Berger, *Die Griechische Daniel-Diegese. Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Leiden 1976) 70–73 zahlreiche Belege aus der apokalyptischen Literatur an, die bei der Schilderung von Katastrophen teilweise nur auf die Formel hinauslaufen ‚wie es

daß während der wundersamen Trockenlegung der Schiffe auf der Adria Menschen zwischen den Schiffen in Verwunderung sind. Eine unscharfe Bemerkung dieser Art hat Ammian anscheinend zu dem wenig wahrscheinlichen Szenario des Spaziergangs einer Menschenmenge auf hoher See zwischen den ans Trockene gesetzten Schiffen inspiriert; 3.) Michael Syrus betont, daß an den Küsten ganze Landstriche und ihre Bewohner vom Wasser heimgesucht werden, und zwar im Gegensatz zur Trockenlegung des Meeresgrunds. Diese scharf kontrastierende, auf die Verkehrung der Verhältnisse zielende Darstellung des Naturphänomens, wie sie auch für Ammian charakteristisch ist (ohne daß dieser seine Quelle mißverstanden hat), findet sich auch beim Kirchenhistoriker Sokrates, aber auch bei weiteren Quellen, die mittelbar vom anonymen Homöer abhängen.[22]

Trotz dieser größeren Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Michael Syrus und Ammian wäre es allerdings falsch, bei der Rekonstruktion des homöischen Kirchenhistorikers auf Theophanes zu verzichten. Denn Theophanes hat seinerseits Elemente der Erzählung erhalten, die bei Michael Syrus verloren gegangen sind, nämlich z. B. die Hervorhebung, daß der gesamte Weltkreis vom Geschehen erfaßt wurde, oder der Hinweis auf die Dächer von Alexandreia, auf denen die Schiffe landeten.

In das Umfeld der weitgehend verlorengegangenen heterodoxen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung verweist auch die Darstellung des Georgios Monachos.[23] Sie ist mit der Darstellung des Theophanes und des Michael Syrus eng verwandt, aber nicht identisch. Wegen der vielfach gegebenen wertvollen zusätzlichen Informationen ist völlig ausgeschlossen, daß Georgios nur eine ‚représentation…amplifiée' frühe-

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nie zuvor gewesen ist'. Ammian hat diese apokalyptische Formel in die Sprache des heidnischen Historikers übersetzt.

[22] Socr. *HE* 4.3.4: ‚Das Meer wechselte seine eigenen Grenzen. An bestimmten Orten überschwemmte es soviel, daß zuvor gangbare Stellen zu Schiff befahren wurden. Von anderen Orten wich es soweit zurück, daß die zur See Fahrenden auf dem Trockenen angetroffen wurden.' Knapper Hier. *Chron.* 244 c. Der Bericht des Sokrates wird von Jacques, Bousquet, ‚Le raz de marée du 21 juillet 365', 452 zutreffend charakterisiert: ‚Il ne disposait sans doute que d'une relation très imprécise du phénomène, comparable à celle des chroniques qui nous sont parvenues; aussi ne se représenta-t-il pas un tsunami, mais des mouvements opposés des flots, variables selon les lieux: tantôt un envahissement, tantôt un reflux.'

[23] Für die Annahme von Waldherr, ‚Die Geburt der „kosmischen Katastrophe"', 189, Anm. 107, Georgios Monachos und Kedrenos hingen von Hieronymus *Vita Hilarionis* (PL 23, cap. 40) ab, gibt es keinen ausreichenden Anhaltspunkt.

rer Berichte oder gar bloße ‚imagination' von sich gibt.[24] Georgios Monachos hat in der Regel seine Quellen in völlig unselbständiger Weise wortwörtlich kopiert und bietet dementsprechend für das 3. Jahrhundert eine völlig unergiebige Kompilation dürftigster Informationen. Für das 4. Jahrhundert fallen einige Stücke auf, in denen der Chronist wesentlich ausführlicher wird und bei denen die griechische Prosa sich wesentlich verbessert. Das liegt daran, daß ab diesem Zeitpunkt größere Exzerpte aus der nacheusebianischen Kirchengeschichte Eingang in sein Werk gefunden haben. Dabei ist die Benutzung einer kirchengeschichtlichen Kompilation anzunehmen. Aus einer solchen Kompilation stammt auch unser Stück, in dem ein kleinerer Teil (Bericht über das Erdbeben in Nikaia und Germe) eindeutig auf Sokrates Scholastikos zurückgeht.[25] Beim größeren, ungleich ausführlicheren Teil über die Tsunamikatastrophe (zu dem auch einige hinter das Sokrates-Stück gestellte Schlußbemerkungen über die Versorgungsnöte der aus Angst vor dem Tsunami in das Landesinnere geflohenen Personen gehören) ist dagegen die Benutzung eines anderen, heute verschollenen Kirchenhistorikers anzunehmen. Dabei spricht vieles dafür, daß es sich hier um ein Fragment Philostorgs handelt, der in kirchengeschichtlichen Kompilationen der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit wie etwa der ‚Zwillingsquelle' seine Spuren hinterlassen hat.[26]

Zunächst ist hier die Tatsache anzuführen, daß der Bericht des Georgios Monachos mit demjenigen des homöischen Historikers zwar weitgehend parallel, aber doch nicht mit ihm identisch ist. Der Bericht ist komplexer strukturiert, zahlreiche zusätzliche Details werden erwähnt, die literarische Gestaltung ist weiter vorangetrieben. Damit entsprechen die Unterschiede zwischen dem homöischen Historiker und Georgios Monachos genau dem Verhältnis, das auch sonst zwischen dem homöischen Historiker und der insgesamt komplexeren Darstellung Philostorgs zu konstatieren ist.[27] Bidez hat gerade wegen die-

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[24] So aber Jacques, Bousquet, ‚Le raz de marée du 21 juillet 365', 449.

[25] Georg. Mon. p. 561,11–15 de Boor-Wirth. Vgl. Socr. *HE* 4.11.4–5. Dieses Erdbeben ist 368 zu datieren und hat mit der (von Georgios allerdings falsch datierten) Tsunamikatastrophe nichts zu tun.

[26] Zur ‚Zwillingsquelle' vgl. Edwin Patzig, ‚Über einige Quellen des Zonaras II', *ByzZ* 6 (1897) 322–356; Bruno Bleckmann, ‚Constantina, Vetranio und Gallus Caesar', *Chiron* 24 (1994) 29–68, bes. 35, Anm. 34 (mit weiterer Literatur zu dieser sicher nachweisbaren, teilweise Philostorgstoff benutztenden Kompilation, deren Reste vor allem bei Kedrenos und Zonaras zu finden sind).

[27] Für die Geschichte Julians hat Philostorg einen Großteil seiner Erzählung über die Verfolgung durch den Apostaten dem homöischen Historiker entnommen, vgl. im ein-

ser Ähnlichkeiten den rekonstruierten homöischen Historiker zwar als Anhang VII in seine Ausgabe eingefügt, seine Angaben aber nicht benutzt, um den Text Philostorgs wiederherzustellen. Zu Philostorg passen ferner Elemente einer an geographischen und naturwissenschaftlichen (und darunter auch seismischen) Phänomenen orientierten Gelehrsamkeit. So findet man allein bei Georgios Monachos nicht nur genaue Beobachtungen, z. B. zu den Wirkungen der Tsunamikatastrophe im Niltal, sondern auch eine präzise Liste der von der Tsunamikatastrophe getroffenen Landstriche. Die direkte Transkription aus dem Lateinischen (*Afrike* statt *Libye*) findet ihre Parallele bei Philostorg VI 7a p. 75 und kann auf keinen Fall eine Eigenleistung des Georgios Monachos selbst sein. Selbst die Übertreibung der bis nach Britannien reichenden kosmischen Katastrophe läßt sich deshalb mit dem zum apokalyptischen Szenario neigenden Historiker in Verbindung bringen, weil sich bei Georgios Monachos in genau der gleichen Weise wie in den gesicherten Fragmenten Philostorgs die Wendung *hai Britannikai nesoi* statt *Britannia* findet.[28] Die Idee, daß Britannien ein Archipel darstellt (hinzugezählt wird vor allem Irland), stammt aus der antiken geographischen Gelehrsamkeit[29] und ist keineswegs in der mittelbyzantinischen Epoche, in der die meisten Oströmer wahrscheinlich nicht einmal von der Existenz Britanniens wußten, eine geläufige Münze gewesen.

Auf Philostorg kann schließlich eine letzte Beobachtung verweisen. Sowohl Georgios Monachos als auch Kedrenos (aus der ‚Zwillingsquelle' oder direkt aus Georgios Monachos) datieren die Tsunamikatastrophe in die Regierung Gratians.[30] Nun sind Naturkatastrophen in der

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zelnen: *Ar. Hist.* 33 (Numerierung nach Bidez *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte*, Anhang VII): Lynchmord an Georg von Kappadokien, vgl. Philost. *HE* 7.2; *Ar. Hist.* 33: Frevel an den Gebeinen Johannes des Täufers, vgl. Philost. *HE* 7.4; *Ar. Hist.* 33: Julian sät Zwietracht unter den Bischöfen, vgl. Philost. *HE* 7.4; *Ar. Hist.* 35: Julian, der heilige Babylas und Daphne, vgl. Philost. *HE* 7.8; *Ar. Hist.* 35: Göttliche Vergeltung für Felix und Iulianus, den *comes Orientis*, vgl. Philost. *HE* 7.10. Die Serie ließe sich fortsetzen.

[28] Philost. *HE* 3.1a (*Artemii Passio* 8) p. 29 Bidez mit Theophylakt von Ochrid *Passio XV Martyrum* (PG 126, 160 B) p. 29 Bidez (im Testimonienapparat). Zur Stelle vgl. Bruno Bleckmann, ‚Der Bürgerkrieg zwischen Constantin II. und Constans (340 n. Chr.)', *Historia* 42 (2003) 225–250, bes. 228 f.

[29] Zu den einschlägigen Belegen von Pytheas bis Ptolemaios vgl. E. Hübner, ‚Britanni', *RE* 3 (1897) 858–878, bes. 859–860.

[30] Kedrenos erzählt in einer Dublette gleich zweimal von der Tsunamikatastrophe, nämlich in *Chron.* 1.550,17–551,2 Bonn (aus Theophanes) und 1.543,21–544,3 (aus der Zwillingsquelle oder aus Georgios Monachos: Datierung in die Regierungszeit Gratians).

Kirchengeschichtsschreibung wie generell in der antiken Geschichtsschreibung bekanntlich keine kontingenten Ereignisse, sondern unheilverkündende Omina oder Strafmaßnahmen für Verstöße gegen die göttliche Weltordnung (für die Heiden etwa durch die Vernachlässigung von Opfern, für die Christen auf heidnische Umtriebe oder auf Häresien). Wenn Kedrenos vermerkt, Gratian sei ein häretischer Kaiser gewesen,[31] stimmt dieser Standpunkt mit demjenigen der griechischsprachigen orthodoxen Geschichtsschreibung nicht überein,[32] wohl aber mit demjenigen Philostorgs, der im Kaiser Gratian wegen der beginnenden Verfolgung der Arianer einen neuen „Nero" sieht.[33] Die von Kedrenos und Georgios Monachos benutzte kirchengeschichtliche Kompilation (‚Zwillingsquelle'?) dürfte somit in unkritischer Weise die Bewertung Gratians in der anhomöischen Geschichtsschreibung übernommen und die Tsunamikatastrophe als fatales Omen für die unheilvolle Regierung Gratians dargestellt haben. Gratian trat 367 seine Regierung als Augustus an (als Mitregent seines Vaters Valentinian I.). Der präzisen Chronologie mußte also hier leichte Gewalt angetan werden.[34] Das hat antike Historiographen bekanntlich nicht grundsätzlich gestört.[35] Auch Ammian setzt sich bei der Herstellung von sinnhaltigen

[31] Kedren. *Chron.* 1.550,11 Bonn: αἱρετικός.

[32] Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II. Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret* (Göttingen 1996) 103. Bei Zon. 13.17.7 versagt Gratian als orthodoxer Kaiser dem Häretiker Valens vor Adrianopel seine Hilfe. Diese Erzählung stammt aus der Synopsisquelle, vgl. Synopsis Sathas p. 61,15–21.

[33] Philost. *HE* 10.5, p. 127,20–22 Bidez (Exzerpt des Photios): ‚Der Schriftsteller erdichtet viele Verleumdungen gegen Gratian, so daß er ihn sogar mit Nero vergleicht. Nicht gefiel ihm (Philostorg), wie es scheint, die Orthodoxie seines Glaubens.'

[34] Vorgegeben war diese Fehldatierung anscheinend bereits beim anonymen homöischen Historiker. Theophan. *Chron.* p. 56,9 de Boor datiert den Tsunami zu der Zeit, in der sich Valens in Markianopel (fälschlich in Ägypten lokalisiert) aufhielt, also während des ersten Gotenkriegs; vgl. Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002) 127–129 mit Verweis auf *Cod. Theod.* 12.18.1. Dieser Aufenthalt in Markianopel ist Philost. *HE* 9.7 p. 118 Bidez bekannt. Da aber im Photiosexzerpt keine Spuren vom Bericht über den Tsunami erhalten geblieben sind, kann nicht festgestellt werden, ob die gleichen Verbindungen hergestellt wurden wie bei Theophanes.

[35] Ammian verlegt, um die Tsunami-Katastrophe nicht als negatives Omen des in seinen Augen unwichtigen Prokop-Aufstands erscheinen zu lassen, diese in die Zeit nach der Niederschlagung Prokops. Tacitus verschiebt den Zeitpunkt des Piso-Prozesses im Interesse seiner literarischen Komposition, vgl. zu den durch das neue *SC de Gnaeo Pisone patre* gebotenen Aufschlüssen Anthony J. Woodman, Ronald H. Martin, *The Annals of Tacitus. Book 3* (Cambridge 1996) 67–77.

Beziehungen zwischen Störungen der natürlichen Ordnung und der politischen Ereignisgeschichte über die Rolle eines exakten Chronisten hinweg.[36]

Die Passagen bei Theophanes und Georgios Monachos lassen sich also beide der nacheusebianischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts zuweisen: Georgios Monachos benutzt einen literarisch stärker komponierten und gestalteten Bericht, der mit einiger Wahrscheinlichkeit aus Philostorg stammt, Theophanes dagegen eine ältere Version, die der homöischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der (frühen) theodosianischen Epoche entspricht und die wohl auch die Grundlage der Darstellung Philostorgs war. Damit läßt sich plausibel machen, daß Ammian die ihm greifbare Kirchengeschichtsschreibung seiner eigenen Zeit nicht nur zur Kenntnis nahm, sondern auch über längere Strecken ausschlachtete. Diese Berührungen zwischen Ammian und der homöischen Geschichtsschreibung sind dabei kein Einzelfall, der nur für den Tsunami von 365 auffällt. Vielmehr sind Berührungen dieser Art auch für die Ermordung Georgs von Kappadokien nachzuweisen. Auf die Benutzung dieser Quelle durch Ammian hat bereits H.C. Brennecke in einer wichtigen und von der Ammianforschung verstärkt zu beachtenden Studie aufmerksam gemacht.[37]

## III. *Valentinian I. und Valens: Einige Beziehungen zwischen der spätgriechischen Geschichtsschreibung und Ammianus Marcellinus*

Der Vergleich mit dem homöischen Anonymus bietet ein wichtiges Indiz dafür, daß Ammian keine frei zirkulierenden mündlichen Versionen benutzt hat, sondern daß er bereits gestaltete historiographische Quellen benutzte, daß also seine Inspiration ganz ‚bookish' war.

Die Untersuchung weiterer Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen spätgriechischen Quellen und der Erzählung Ammians liefert zusätzliche Indizien.[38] Drei weitere Beispiele sind zu diskutieren. Daß es nicht wesent-

[36] Vgl. zu der in Wirklichkeit nur partiellen und auf römischem Territorium überhaupt nicht zu sehenden Sonnenfinsternis vom 28. August 360 und dem irrigen Bericht bei Amm. 20.3.1 Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 102–104. Zum Problem vgl. auch Waldherr, ‚Die Geburt der „kosmischen Katastrophe"', 198–199.

[37] H.C. Brennecke, ‚Christliche Quellen des Ammianus Marcellinus?', *ZAC* 1 (1997) 226–250.

[38] Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', 166 weist auf den Wert des Vergleichs

lich mehr sein können, liegt an der äußersten Dürftigkeit profangeschichtlicher Passagen, die überhaupt in der spätgriechisch-byzantinischen Chronistik konserviert worden sind.

### a. *Die Porträts Valentinians I. und Jovians*

Das Porträt, das Ammian von Valentinian I. zeichnet, stimmt auffällig mit der Beschreibung einer Quelle überein, deren Reste sich bei Leo Grammatikos und Kedrenos finden, die aber letztlich auf Petros Patrikios zurückgeht.[39] Im Valentinian-Porträt Ammians (30.9.6) liest man: *corpus eius lacertosum et validum, capilli fulgor colorisque nitor, cum oculis caesiis, semper obliquum intuentibus, atque pulchritudo staturae, liniamentorumque recta compago maiestatis regiae decus implebat.* Bei Kedrenos ist die Beschreibung identisch (bis hin zur fast gleichen Reihung der einzelnen Elemente des Porträts) geraten: ‚Er (Valentinian) war hinsichtlich der Gestalt seines Körpers ein großer und gut gewachsener Mann, er hatte eine rötliche Hautfarbe, blondes Haupthaar, und anmutige Augen, die leicht blaugrau waren.'[40] Ammian hat dabei die aus einer gemeinsamen (auch von *epit.* 45 benutzten) Quelle stammenden Bemerkungen möglicherweise im Sinne seiner Tendenz verformt:[41] Bei Ammian werden zwar

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mit spätgriechischen Quellen hin: ‚The value of this type of criticism is greatly underestimated. So, it may be added, is the value of Byzantine sources for the fourth century A.D.' Einiges ist allerdings hier bereits geleistet, vgl. Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts*, 327–395 sowie auch meine zahlreichen übrigen Arbeiten zum Thema; vgl. z. B. Bruno Bleckmann, ‚Die Chronik des Johannes Zonaras und eine pagane Quelle zur Geschichte Konstantins', *Historia* 40 (1991) 343–365, bes. 358–363 (Ammian und die Leoquelle zu den *mendacia* Metrodors); Bruno Bleckmann, ‚Silvanus und seine Anhänger in Italien: Zur Deutung zweier kampanischer Inschriften für den Usurpator Silvanus (*CIL* X 6945 und 6946)', *Athenaeum* 88 (2000) 477–483, bes. 477 ff. (Parallelen in der Erzählung Ammians und des Zonaras über die Usurpation des Silvanus).

[39] Dazu ausführlich Bruno Bleckmann, ‚Bemerkungen zu den Annales des Nicomachus Flavianus', *Historia* 44 (1995) 83–99, 87–89.

[40] Kedren. *Chron.* 1.541,3–5 Bonn: ἦν δὲ τῷ σώματι εὐμεγέθης, τὴν χροιὰν ἐρυθρός, τὴν τρίχα τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐπίξανθον ἔχων, τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὡραίους, μικρὸν ἐπιγλαυκίζοντας.

[41] Hinweise auf Körpergröße, Beschaffenheit der Haare, der Haut und der Augenfarbe finden sich in dieser Form nicht in den anderen Kaiserporträts Ammians. Amm. 25.10.14 behandelt für Jovian den Gang, den Gesichtsausdruck, die Augenfarbe und die Körpergröße Jovians: Es sind also andere Elemente in einer anderen Reihung. Die Annahme, daß sich die Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Leoquelle und Ammian allein durch die Benutzung identischer Formeln der spätantiken Panegyrik (zur Verwendung asyndetischer Reihungen von Persönlichkeitsmerkmalen in der spätantiken Hagiographie, vgl. F. Lotter, ‚Methodisches zur Gewinnung historischer Erkenntnisse aus hagiographischen Quellen', *HZ* 229 [1979] 298–356, bes. 322–323) demonstrieren lässt, ist daher m. E. nicht ausreichend. Zur Tendenz des Valentinianporträts vgl. neben

im Unterschied zur byzantinischen Tradition die körperlichen Eigenschaften Valentinians mit positiven und aus der panegyrischen Sprache entlehnten Begriffen dargestellt, aber der Kaiser ist gleichwohl in seiner Gesamterscheinung dem konventionellen Barbarentypus angeglichen und erhält statt einer rötlichen eine glänzend weiße Haut.[42] Die blaugrauen Augen sind nicht mehr anmutig, sondern schielen in Tyrannenmanier.[43]

Parallelen mit anderen Kaiserporträts der Leoquelle bestätigten die Annahme, daß Ammian in größerem Umfang für alle Kaiser, die zu seinen Lebzeiten regierten, eine Quelle umgestaltet hat, die in großen Teilen auch der *Epitome de Caesaribus* und der Leoquellentradition vorlag.[44] Während die Übereinstimmungen für Constantius und Julian an anderer Stelle behandelt worden sind,[45] ist hier zusätzlich auf das Jovian-Porträt aus der Leoquelle hinzuweisen. Hier liegen einige Reste vor, die mit der Darstellung Ammians vergleichbar sind. Zu rekonstruieren ist die Leoquelle hier aus Zonaras 13.14.19–20: ‚ein wohlwollender Mann (ἀγαθοθελής), aber er unterlag dem Wein und der kör-

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François Paschoud, ‚Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst und H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 67–84 allerdings die skeptischen Bemerkungen von Hans Teitler in diesem Band.

[42] Beim recht unbestimmten Hinweis *capilli fulgor colorisque nitor* läßt sich zumindest (in Verbindung mit dem Hinweis auf ungewöhnlichen Körpergröße und grimmigen Blick) für *color* ein Bezug zu den weißhäutigen (*candidi*) Galliern im ethnographischen Exkurs bei Amm. 15.12.1 gewinnen: *Celsioris staturae et candidi paene Galli sunt omnes et rutili luminumque torvitate terribiles*. Zur Topik vgl. Diod. 5.8.1, Liv. 38.21.9 und Bernhard Kremer, *Das Bild der Kelten bis in augusteische Zeit. Studien zur Instrumentalisierung eines antiken Feindbildes bei griechischen und römischen Autoren* (Stuttgart 1994) 20–22. *Capilli fulgor* kann dagegen eigentlich auf jede helle Haarfarbe bezogen werden, aber daß hinter dem Kompliment hier der Bezug auf die für Barbaren typische rötlich-blonde Haarfarbe (die Gallier sind *rutili*) intendiert ist, würde ich weiterhin nicht ausschließen wollen (zu sicher allerdings Bleckmann, ‚Bemerkungen zu den Annales des Nicomachus Flavianus', 89).

[43] Vgl. Amm. 20.9.2 zum Schielen des „Tyrannen" Constantius: *limibusque oculis eos adusque metum contuens*.

[44] Auf eine Diskussion, mit welchem Autor diese gemeinsame Quellengrundlage in Verbindung zu bringen ist, sei hier mit Absicht verzichtet. Zu den jüngeren Forschungen zu Nicomachus Flavianus vgl. François Paschoud, ‚Quelques problèmes actuels relatifs à l'historiographie de l'antiquité tardive', *SO* 73 (1998) 74–87, bes. 82–84.

[45] Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts*, 366–372 und 387–388. Einige der Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen den Porträts bei Zonaras und Ammian wurden bereits von E. Patzig, ‚Über die Quelle des Anonymus Valesii', *ByzZ* 7 (1898) 572–585 beschrieben. Patzig hatte diese Gemeinsamkeiten dahingehend gedeutet, daß der salmasische Johannes Antiochenus (in etwa mit der Leoquelle identisch) direkt Ammian benutzt habe.

perlichen Liebe. Und was den Wuchs seines Körpers betrifft, war er ziemlich lang, und er war nicht ungebildet.' Ferner bieten Kedrenos und Leo Grammatikos ein zusätzliches Detail: ‚Er war vom Wuchs ziemlich lang, so daß kein einziges von den kaiserlichen Gewändern ihm paßte.'[46] Letzteres hat im Jovian-Porträt Ammians fast eine wörtliche Entsprechung: *vasta proceritate et ardua, adeo, ut diu nullum indumentum regium ad mensuram eius aptum inveniretur.*[47] Die bei Zonaras zu findenden Hinweise auf charakterliche Stärken (Wohlwollen) und Schwächen (Wein und Weib) tauchen bei Ammian in umgekehrter Reihenfolge auf: *magisque* **benivolus** *et perpensius, ut apparebat ex paucis, quos promoverat iudices, electurus; edax tamen et* **vino venerique** *indulgens.*[48] Der Hinweis, Jovian sei nicht ungebildet gewesen,[49] wird bei Ammian in tendenziöser Absicht in *mediocriter eruditus* korrigiert.

Aus dieser, durch signifikante Übereinstimmungen eindeutig nachgewiesenen Quelle stammen bei Ammian aber nicht nur einige Elemente seiner Kaiserporträts, sondern zumindest auch einige Anekdoten, wie etwa die Episode um Dagalaifus, und einige Elemente der ereignisgeschichtlichen Darstellung.[50]

### b. *Die Geschichte der Erhebung Prokops*

Im Unterschied zu den orthodoxen Kirchenhistorikern, die sich in der Regel vor allem auf die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen den Bischöfen und den Beziehungen zwischen Bischöfen und Kaisern konzentrieren, hat Philostorg die profanen Ereignisse auf sehr viel breiterer Basis behandelt. Mit gewissen Einschränkungen ist für den Ausbruch, den

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[46] Kedren. *Chron.* 1.539 Bonn; Leo Gramm. p. 95,18–20 Bonn.

[47] 25.10.14.

[48] 25.10.15. Vgl. zu *benivolus* und ἀγαθοθελής François Paschoud, ‚Preuves de la présence d'une source occidentale latine dans la tradition grecque pour l'histoire du 4e siècle', *Journal of Classical Studies Matica Srpska* 3 (2001) 7–17.

[49] Zon. 13.14.20. Das entspricht *epit.* 44.3: *litterarum studiosus.*

[50] Dagalaifus-Episode: Amm. 26.4.1; Leo Gramm. p. 96,21–97,4 Bonn; Kedren. *Chron.* 1.541,13–15 Bonn. Zu weiteren Gemeinsamkeiten vgl. Bleckmann, ‚Bemerkungen zu den Annales des Nicomachus Flavianus', 89–91. Zwar sind Bezüge zwischen Ammian einerseits, Petros Patrikios und der von ihm abgeleiteten Traditionen anderseits für die valentinianische Dynastie nur punktuell nachweisbar—nennen ließen sich etwa noch die Darstellung des Todes Valentinians. Aber das liegt schlicht daran, daß die Fragmente des Petros Patrikios mit der Regierung des Constantius enden und daß Zonaras selbst die Leoquelle ab der Regierungszeit Valentinians nicht mehr benutzt hat. Damit nimmt die Masse der byzantinischen Tradition, die mit Ammian verglichen werden kann, so sehr ab, daß Berührungen nur glückliche Zufälle sind.

Verlauf und das Ende der Usurpation des Prokop ein Vergleich mit der Darstellung Ammians möglich. Die Erzählung Philostorgs über die Anfänge der Erhebung lautet in deutscher Übersetzung:

> Als Valens ins dritte Jahr seiner Kaiserherrschaft getreten war, zog er gegen die Perser zu Felde. Um diese Zeit usurpierte auch Prokop die Herrschaft in Konstantinopel. Dieser Prokop stammte von der Familie Julians ab. Und viele Prophezeiungen machten die Runde, die ihm die Kaiserherrschaft zusprachen, und in zahlreichen Gesprächen wurden diese Prophezeiungen verbreitet. Deswegen war dieser, als Jovian Kaiser geworden war, aus Mesopotamien geflohen und hatte häufig die Orte, in denen er sich unter elenden Bedingungen aufhielt, gewechselt, war auf der Flucht mit seiner Frau und mußte sich verstecken. Als er es schließlich leid war, herumirren zu müssen, warf er, so sagt er (Philostorg), den ‚letzten Würfel'. Als er in Kalchedon angekommen war, versteckte er sich auf dem Grundstück des Eunomios, das außerhalb der Stadt lag, und zwar als der Besitzer gerade verreist war. Von dort setzte er in die Stadt (Konstantinopel) über und nahm ohne Blutvergießen die Kaiserherrschaft in Besitz.[51]

Franz-Josef Wiebe hat hier folgende Parallelen zur Erzählung Ammians nachgewiesen:[52] Wie Philostorg betont Ammian die Verwandtschaft zwischen Prokop und Julian, was zu Gerüchten führt, die ihm die Kaiserherrschaft zuweisen. Ferner berichten beide Quellen als einzige über den Aufenthalt Prokops in Kalchedon. Besonders die Gemeinsamkeit ist signifikant. Beide—Philostorg und Ammian—betonen in identischer (im Philostorg-Exzerpt des Photios ausdrücklich wörtlich zitierter) Wendung, wie Prokop sich nach seinen Irrungen dazu entschließt, alles auf eine Karte zu setzen bzw. ‚den letzten Würfel' zu werfen.[53] Diese Wendung findet sich auffälligerweise auch in der in theodosianischer Zeit verfaßten 24. Rede des Libanios, und zwar in einem kurzen Abriß der Karriere des Prokop.[54] Die dramatische Unterwerfung des für die valentinianische Dynastie hochgefährlichen Aufstands war Gegenstand panegyrischer Darstellungen am Hofe des Valens. Die

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[51] Philost. *HE* 9.5 p. 117 Bidez. Bekanntlich ist nicht das detaillierte Original, sondern nur ein insgesamt sehr knapper Auszug Philostorgs, nämlich derjenige des Patriarchen Photios, erhalten.

[52] F.J. Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens und die heidnische Opposition* (Bonn 1995) 299, Anm. 175. Zu den Parallelen vgl. auch François Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire nouvelle. Tome II, 2e partie, Livre IV* (Paris 1979) 341.

[53] 26.6.12: *aleam periculorum omnium iecit abrupte*. Philost. *HE* 9.5 p. 117 Bidez: τὸν ἔσχατον ἀναρρίπτει κύβον.

[54] Lib. *Or.* 24.13: ἀνέρριψε τὸν κύβον. Es fehlt allerdings der Hinweis auf letzte und extreme Elemente.

Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Philostorg und Ammian gehen auf eine solche historiographisch gestaltete zeitgenössische Erzählung über den Bürgerkrieg zwischen Valens und Prokop zurück, ohne daß eine genaue Entwirrung der Quellenbeziehungen möglich ist.[55]

### c. *Prophezeiungen zum Tode des Valens*

Auffallend ist schließlich, daß Ammian vor allem dort Übereinstimmungen mit Zeugnissen der spätgriechisch-byzantinischen Tradition aufweist, wo es um die Prophezeiung des Untergangs des Valens geht. Diese Prophezeiungen, die angeblich alle zu Lebzeiten des Valens gemacht wurden, können nur *ex eventu* entstanden sein. Das gilt schon für das Diktum des Dagalaifus vor der Erhebung des Valens, das auf dessen (erst 378 manifest gewordene) Regierungsunfähigkeit anspielt. Das gilt weiter für die gescheiterten, aber letztlich in fataler Weise zum richtigen Ergebnis führenden Bemühungen des Theodorus, den Namen des Nachfolgers des Valens zu eruieren—das Orakel gelangt nur bis zur Buchstabenfolge Θ E O Δ.[56] Das gilt schließlich für das Chalkedon- und das Mimas-Orakel, die hier abschließend zu behandeln sind.

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[55] Eine Benutzung Ammians durch die griechische Kirchengeschichtsschreibung ist völlig unwahrscheinlich. Philostorg enthält zusätzliche, Ammian nicht bekannte Details, z. B. die Tatsache, daß Prokop mit seiner Frau auf der Flucht ist, vgl. Zos. 4.5.1–2. Im Beziehungsgeflecht der Quellen bietet der ausführliche Bericht des Zosimos weitere Indizien für die Existenz historiographischer Erzählungen, derer sich Ammian bedienen konnte, vgl. etwa die mit Amm. 26.8.13 identische Wendung bei Zos. 4.7.1 mit Paschoud n. 119. Zosimos hat allerdings seine Erzählung durch gravierende Konfusionen entstellt, was die Herstellung von Beziehungen nicht leichter macht. Allerdings ist bekannt, daß Ammian möglicherweise fundamentale Gegebenheiten—wie etwa zur Diskussion um die Thronfolgekandidatur Salutius Secundus, die vielleicht von der Vakanz von 364 auf die von 363 übertragen worden ist—willkürlich verzerrt hat, vgl. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 140 zu den Unterschieden zwischen Ammian und Zos. 3.30.1: ‚But the traditional assumption that Ammianus is always closer to the truth than Zosimus is mistaken.' Vgl. ibid., 141: ‚It appears to follow that Ammianus has wilfully transferred this attempt to make Salutius emperor from February 364 to June 363 in order to discredit Jovian.' Vgl. ferner Peter Heather, ‚Ammianus on Jovian', in: Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York 1999) 105–116; Raban von Haehling, ‚Ammians Darstellung der Thronbesteigung Jovians im Lichte der heidnisch-christlichen Auseinandersetzung', in: A. Lippold, N. Himmelmann (eds.), *Bonner Festgabe Johannes Straub* (Bonn 1977) 347–358. Gegen Von Haehling siehe jetzt J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV* (Leiden 2005) 174–176.

[56] Amm. 29.1.8–35; Zos. 4.13.3–4; *epit.* 48.3–4. Vgl. Kedren. *Chron.* 1.548,8 ff. Bonn; Zon. 13.16.37–46 (wohl aus der Leoquelle, vgl. Leo Gramm. p. 99.21–22 Bonn: πολλοὺς Οὐάλης ἐφόνευσεν ὑπονοηθέντας βασιλεύειν ἀπὸ τοῦ θῆτα γράμματος). Der Beweisgang,

Mit dem Chalkedon-Orakel läßt Ammian das 31. Buch beginnen. Bei der Zerstörung der Stadtmauern Chalkedons, deren Steine in Konstantinopel für den Bau einer Therme wieder verwendet werden, kommt angeblich eine Inschrift mit griechischen Versen zum Vorschein, die auf das Unheil von 378 hinweist.[57] Sobald aus den Steinen von Chalkedon die Therme in Konstantinopel errichtet worden sei, würden barbarische Scharen die Donau überschreiten, die Provinz Skythien und Moesien verwüsten, bei dem Abzug nach Illyrikum aber ihr Ende finden. Mit geringen Varianten findet sich diese Version auch bei Sokrates und bei den byzantinischen Chronisten Kedrenos, Leo Grammatikos und Zonaras.[58] Die spätgriechischen Quellen bringen neben dem Thermenbau auch die Wasserleitung des Valens ins Spiel, die der Wasserzulieferung für das neue Bad diente.

Daß eine solche unheilverkündende Inschrift vor 378 während der Zerstörung der Stadtmauern von Chalkedon wirklich zum Vorschein gekommen sein soll, ist kaum glaubhaft.[59] Die Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen der spätgriechischen Tradition und Ammian, die bis zur fast identischen Form der Verse reichen, sind nicht damit zu erklären, daß beide Traditionen eben das gleiche Faktum erwähnen, sondern weisen auf eine literarische Beziehung hin. Auch hier ist eine Abhängigkeit der griechischen Tradition von Ammian wieder auszuschließen. In der spätgriechischen Tradition wird prophezeit, daß die Barbaren bis nach Thrakien gelangen, bei Ammian bis nach Pannonien.[60] In der spätgriechischen Tradition wird darüber hinaus die Zerstörung Chalkedons explizit mit der Unterstützung der Stadt für die Sache Prokops erklärt, während bei Ammian diese Zerstörung nur damit begründet wird, daß Valens Baumaterial für seine Thermen benötigt.[61]

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daß es sich um ein *vaticinium ex eventu* handelt, bei Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens*, 100–106. Bei Amm. 29.1.32 werden nur die ersten drei Buchstaben explizit genannt, beim vierten wird nur deutlich, daß er gezogen worden ist. Das ist nur eine etwas kompliziertere und spannender gestaltete Variante seiner Vorlage, die von vier Buchstaben sprach.

[57] 31.1.4–5.

[58] Socr. *HE* 4.8.1–7; Kedren. *Chron.* 1.542,22–543,20; Zon. 13.16.31–36. Leo Grammatikos p. 98,1–3 hat diesen Bericht in mißverständlicher Weise komprimiert. Er verwechselt Valens mit Valentinian, berichtet über die Zerstörung der Stadt Chalkedon und über die Errichtung einer großen Wasserleitung.

[59] Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 228, nimmt dagegen an, die Heiden von Chalkedon hätten eine solche Tafel nach der Niederschlagung des Prokop-Aufstands angefertigt, die dann bei der Zerstörung der Mauer durch Valens zu Tage getreten sei.

[60] 31.1.5: Παιονίης.

[61] 31.1.4: *denique cum Calchedonos subverterentur veteres muri, ut apud Constantinopolim aedificaretur lavacrum.* Die Parteinahme der Chalkedonier für Prokop wird von Ammian

Ähnliche Beziehungen zwischen Ammian und der späten griechischen Tradition lassen sich für das Mimas-Orakel feststellen. Nach einer Prophezeiung sollte Valens dort sein Ende finden, wo der Name Mimas eine Rolle spielte. Die von Ammian (31.14.8–9) gebotene Version lautet:

> Es ziemt sich aber nicht, jenes Faktum zu übergehen, daß nämlich, als er über das Dreifußorakel, welches Patricius und Hilarius, wie wir gezeigt haben, in Bewegung gesetzt haben, jene drei schicksalsverkündenden Verse erfahren hatte, von denen der letzte lautet:
>
> ‚Wenn in den Gefilden des Mimas Ares zornig wütet',
>
> er, ungebildet und roh wie er war, das am Anfang verachtete. Mit dem Voranschreiten überaus großer Unglücksfälle, schrak er aber, in verächtlicher Weise feige, in Erinnerung an eben dieses Orakel vor dem Namen ‚Asien' zurück. Er hatte gehört, daß dort—gelehrte Männer berichteten es ihm—nach dem Zeugnis Homers und Ciceros der Berg Mimas die Stadt Erythrai überrage. Nach seinem Untergang und nach dem Abzug der Feinde schließlich soll in der Nähe des Ortes, an dem er vermutlich fiel, die felsige Aufschüttung eines Monuments entdeckt worden sein, auf welche ein Stein mit einer Inschrift aus griechischen Buchstaben angebracht war und anzeigte, daß dort ein berühmter Mann Mimas aus alter Zeit bestattet sei.

Die gleiche Erzählung findet sich bei Kedrenos (549,20–550,3 Bonn) und Zonaras (13.16.20–24):

> Und im Traum erblickte Valens einen Mann, der ihm sagte:
>
> ‚Geh sofort zum großen Mimas,
> Dort rafft dich schrecklicher Tod hinweg, Elender.'
>
> Als er nun erwachte, erkundigte er sich, wer denn Mimas sei. Und einer von denen, die eine literarische Bildung hatten (solche Leute waren damals in der Umgebung und in der häuslichen Nähe von Kaisern: oh, wäre das auch noch heute der Fall!), antwortet ihm, daß der Mimas ein Gebirge Asiens sei, das am Meer liege. Dieses Gebirge erwähne auch Homer in der Odyssee, indem er sage: ‚…vorbei am windigen Mimas'. Darauf soll jener gesagt haben: ‚Was gibt es für mich die Notwendigkeit, dieses Gebirge zu erreichen und dort zu sterben?' Als er nun gegen die Skythen zog und in Thrakien mit ihnen zusammentraf, wurde er in schimpflicher Weise besiegt … Nachdem aber die Barbaren sich von dort zurückgezogen hatten und einige nach der Leiche des Kaisers forschten, wurde ein Grab im Haus, in dem jener verbrannt war, gefun-

(26.8.2) selbst bezeugt.

den, welches die Inschrift für einen Mann aus dem Altertum[62] hatte: ‚Dort liegt der Heerführer Mimas, ein Makedone'.[63]

Die explizite Verknüpfung des Mimas- mit dem Theodoros-Orakel findet sich in der byzantinischen Tradition nicht, die auch in der Darstellung der schicksalsverkündenden Verse über Mimas von der Erzählung Ammians abweicht.[64] Aus der konkreten Bezeichnung der Position des Makedonen Mimas hat Ammian einen *nobilis quidam* gemacht. Richtiger als bei Ammian ist in der byzantinischen Tradition das Homerzitat wiedergegeben.[65] Insgesamt stimmen beide Traditionen nicht nur in allen Details des weit hergeholten Orakels überein (Verweis von Gelehrten auf Homer für die Lokalisierung des Mimas-Gebirges; Entdeckung des Grabes mit einer Inschrift nach dem Abzug der Barbaren, am Todesort des Kaisers),[66] sondern auch in einigen Wendungen. Μετὰ

[62] Kedren. *Chron.* 1.550,2–3 Bonn spricht von einem ‚Grab eines Mannes aus dem Altertum, das folgende Inschrift hatte' (τάφος ἀρχαίου τινὸς ἐπιγεγραμμένος οὕτως).

[63] Die Übersetzung folgt der Version des Zonaras. Als gebildeter Byzantiner beklagt der aus dem politischen Getriebe verdrängte Zonaras, daß die Kaiser in seiner eigenen Zeit bildungsfern waren. Das ist eine der wenigen persönlichen Äußerungen des Chronisten.

[64] Eine Abhängigkeit des Zonaras von Ammian, wie sie im insgesamt sehr aufschlußreichen Aufsatz von Tadeusz Zawadzki, ‚Les procès politiques de l'an 371/372 (Amm. Marc. XXIX 1,29–33; Eunapius Vitae Soph. VII 6,3–4; D 480)', in: Heinz E. Herzig, R. Frei-Stolba (eds.), *Labor omnibus unus. Gerold Walser zum 70. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart 1989) 274–287, bes. 276, angenommen wird, ist also ausgeschlossen.

[65] Hom. *Od.* 3.172. Dort ist nichts darüber ausgesagt, daß der Mimas Erythrai überragt. Der Hinweis auf Cicero *Att.* 16.13.2 demonstriert die römische Bildung Ammians, aber Cicero zitiert auch nur den Homervers.

[66] Ein solch kompliziertes Orakel war in Wirklichkeit zur Erklärung von ‚Mimas' gar nicht notwendig, da es auch einen thrakischen Mimas gibt (Sil. Ital. 3.494 und Lucan. 7.450), dessen Erwähnung als Anspielung auf Adrianopel hätte genügen müssen. Franz Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso, Metamorphosen. Kommentar Buch I–III* (Heidelberg 1969) 298 nimmt allerdings an, dieses thrakische Gebirge habe es nicht gegeben und Lukan und Silius Italicus hätten hier schlicht Ovid. *Met.* 2.222 mißverstanden, wo in ungeregelter Reihenfolge geographisch nicht zusammengehörige Gebirge (wie Rhodope in Thrakien und Mimas in Ionien) aufgezählt worden seien. Übersehen hat Bömer hier *Etymologicum Magnum* p. 588,1–4, wo ein Dichter Ammonius als Gewährsmann für die Existenz eines Mimas-Gebirges in Thrakien zitiert wird. Die Phlegräischen Felder, auf denen der Gigant Mimas wütet, werden in einer gelehrten Tradition ebenfalls in Thrakien lokalisiert (*Scholia ad Apollonium Rhodium vetera*, ed. C. Wendel [Berlin 1935] lib. III 1227 b), vgl. hierzu Zawadzki, ‚Les procès politiques de l'an 371/372', 281ff. Das Mimas-Orakel hat also gewissermaßen „sekundären" Charakter und erklärt sich daraus, daß irgendein Literat in ähnlicher Weise wie Bömer ignorierte, daß es einen thrakischen Mimas gab, und er deshalb einen verblichenen Aristokraten Mimas erfinden mußte.

τὴν τῶν πολεμίων ἀναχώρησιν (Kedren. *Chron.* 1.549,22–550,1 Bonn) hat etwa seine exakte Entsprechung in der Wendung *post discessum hostilem*.[67]

Nähere Bestimmungen zur gemeinsamen Quelle, die von Ammian und der byzantinischen Tradition für die diversen Orakel zur Katastrophe von 378 benutzt worden sind, lassen sich kaum ausmachen.[68] Da die byzantinischen Parallelzeugnisse hier der kirchengeschichtlichen Tradition (‚Zwillingsquelle') zuzuordnen sind[69]—das Chalkedon-Orakel findet sich sogar bei einem Kirchenhistoriker—, ist die zunächst naheliegende Annahme, Ammian habe diese Orakel einem paganen griechischen Milieu zu verdanken, nicht zu belegen.[70] Allerdings kommt auch der anonyme Homöer, den Ammian an anderer Stelle benutzt hat, hier nicht in Frage, da er kaum ein Negativbild des homöisch orientierten Kaisers Valens geboten haben kann. Gerade beim Mimas-Orakel schließen aber die engen inhaltlichen Übereinstimmungen bei der Darstellung eines an sich absurden, aber sehr konkret beschriebenen Sachzusammenhangs und die teilweise wörtlichen Anklänge auf jeden Fall die Benutzung einer nur mündlich zirkulierenden Erzählung aus.

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Daß Ammian selbst in höchst geistvoller Weise das Orakel mit feinen und doppeldeutigen Anspielungen auf den Giganten Mimas und das ionische Gebirge erfunden haben soll, wie Zawadzki annimmt, schließe ich aus.

[67] Kedren. *Chron.* 1.550,2 Bonn: ἀρχαίου τινὸς; Amm. 31.8.9: *nobilem quendam Mimanta* **veterem**.

[68] Genauer zu untersuchen wären hier für eine eingehende Würdigung der Originalität der Erzählung Ammians zum Desaster des Valens auch die Übereinstimmungen zwischen Amm. 31.4.1, 31.4.8–9, 31.4.11, 31.5.5–7 und Jordanes *Get.* 129–131 und 134–138. Sehr summarische Behandlung der Beziehungen zwischen Jordanes und Ammian bei Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 477, Anm. 6. Jordanes weiß etwa in einem Punkt mehr zu den Absichten des Lupicinus, vgl. Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 328.

[69] Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Zonaras und Kedrenos für die Regierungszeit des Valens sind dieser Quelle in der Regel dann zuzuschreiben, wenn Parallelen bei Leo Grammatikos fehlen, dafür aber Parallelen in der Kirchengeschichtsschreibung auffallen.

[70] Zum Mimas im Theodoros-Orakel vgl. Amm. 29.1.33 und 31.14.8–9. Die Initiatoren dieses Orakels Patricius und Hilarius (Eunap. *Vit. Soph.* 7.3.4 d 476) werden bei Eunapius völlig abweichend von Ammian charakterisiert, vgl. Zawadzki, ‚Les procès politiques de l'an 371/372', 278–279. Eunapius kann damit als Quelle Ammians hier ganz ausgeschlossen werden.

## IV. *Ergebnis: Ammian und seine Quellen*

Programmatisch erklärt Ammian in 15.1.1 bereits für die vorangehenden Darlegungen der thukydideischen Methode der Primärforschung verpflichtet gewesen zu sein, und kündigt für die Zeitgeschichte ab 355 eine noch detailliertere Behandlung im gleichen Geiste an.[71] Die gegenwärtige Ammianforschung neigt dazu, diese ‚Worte in ihrem vollen Gewicht'[72] zu nehmen. Ammian soll—so könnte man die gegenwärtige *communis opinio* zur historiographischen Technik des Autors charakterisieren[73]—allenfalls Archivmaterial,[74] vor allem aber Augenzeugenberichte in großem Umfang benutzt haben. Durch die Vielfalt seiner Informationen und die von ihm selbst eingestreuten Reflexionen wird sein Text zu einem hochkomplexen Mosaik, in dem Anleihen bei zeitgenössischen Autoren allenfalls als Akzente gesetzt werden, die die Nuancierung des Textes vergrößern und ihn um reizvolle Facetten im Spiel mit der Intertextualität bereichern.

Vergangene Epochen haben das programmatische Zeugnis des Autors, das bekannten historiographischen Stereotypen entspricht, freilich kritischer betrachtet. ‚Man kann'—so liest man etwa in der einschlägigen Arbeit von Klein—‚Ammian den Vorwurf nicht ersparen, daß es ihm XV 1, 1 an der nötigen Ehrlichkeit und Offenheit gefehlt hat, da er seinen Lesern vorzuspiegeln sucht, er sei in jeder Beziehung selbständig. Diese Täuschung vollständig zu machen, ist ihm das Glück in geradezu wundersamer Weise behilflich gewesen, da es seine schriftlichen Quellen bis auf wenige Reste hat untergehen lassen.'[75] Der historiographische Kontext, in dem Ammian agierte, ist in der Tat völlig verloren gegangen und man muß zumindest die Möglichkeit berücksichtigen, daß Ammian nur durch den Zufall der Überlieferung als ‚lonely historian' erscheint, der im Unterschied zu den sonstigen Gepflogenheiten des spätantiken literarischen Betriebs als Meister der Primärforschung arbeitete. Die spätgriechische und byzantinische Geschichtsschreibung

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[71] 15.1.1: *utcumque potui veritatem scrutari, ea, quae videre licuit per aetatem vel perplexe interrogando versatos in medio scire, narravimus ordine casuum exposito diversorum; residua, quae secuturus aperiet textus, pro virium captu limatius absolvemus.*

[72] Klaus Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt 1982) 53.

[73] Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris 1978). Auch Kelly, ‚Ammianus and the Great Tsunami' ist dessen Auffassung verpflichtet.

[74] Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 57 geht im Gegensatz zu Sabbah nicht von einer breiten Benutzung von Archivmaterial aus.

[75] Walther Klein, *Studien zu Ammianus Marcellinus* (Berlin 1914) 40.

bietet immerhin einige Anhaltspunkte, die das Postulat der älteren Quellenforschung, Ammian habe historiographische Quellen benutzt, über den Grad bloßer Spekulation herausheben.

Denn diese Geschichtsschreibung bietet eine Reihe auffälliger und erklärungsbedürftiger Parallelen zur Erzählung Ammians. Neben der Parallelerzählung bei Zosimos, die—trotz der Relativierungsbemühungen im Geiste Dillemanns und Fornaras[76]—für den Perserkrieg Julians weiterhin signifikant bleibt, sollten die bis in die Regierungszeit Valentinians nachweisbaren Parallelen in der Leoquelle (Zonaras, salmasischer Johannes Antiochenos, Kedrenos und ‚Leo Grammatikos'), aber auch bei Philostorg und beim anonymen  verstärkt betrachtet und gewürdigt werden. Diese Parallelen, aber auch andere Indizien[77] legen die Vermutung nahe, daß Ammian trotz einer ungleich größeren poetischen Darstellungskraft nicht grundsätzlich von der Art und Weise abweicht, in der Aurelius Victor, aber auch die nacheusebianischen Kirchenhistoriker gearbeitet haben.[78] Er greift—so könnte man seine Technik im Sinne der hier geäußerten Vermutung charakterisieren—zu einem beträchtlichen Teil auf Material zurück, das entweder selbst historiographisch gestaltet war (Chroniken, Zeitgeschichtsschreibung etc.) oder zumindest der Historiographie sehr nahe stand (Panegyrik).[79] Dabei ist die Anzahl der benutzten Quellen nicht unendlich groß. Vielmehr hat

[76] L. Dillemann, ‚Ammien Marcellin et les pays de l'Euphrate et du Tigre', *Syria* 37 (1960) 87–158; Charles W. Fornara, ‚Julian's Persian expedition in Ammianus and Zosimus', *JHS* 111 (1991) 1–15.

[77] Auch ohne direkte Parallelen bei anderen Autoren läßt sich plausibel machen, daß Ammian ein offizielles Verzeichnis der stadtrömischen Präfekten (in der Art des Chronographen von 354) benutzt hat, sowie eine stadtrömische Chronik, vgl. dazu Klein, *Studien zu Ammianus Marcellinus*, 52.

[78] Die Enmannsche Kaisergeschichte kann nicht ausschließliche Quelle des Aurelius Victor gewesen sein, vgl. Bruno Bleckmann, ‚Überlegungen zur Enmannschen Kaisergeschichte und zur Formung historischer Traditionen in tetrarchischer und konstantinischer Zeit', *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Bonnense* (Bari 1997) 11–37, bes. 21–30. Die erhaltenen nacheusebianischen Kirchenhistoriker waren ebenfalls keine Meister der Primärforschung. Selbst die dort eingelegten Dokumente stammen nicht aus Archivforschungen, sondern aus bereits zuvor zusammengestellten kirchenrechtlichen Sammlungen wie derjenigen des Sabinus von Herakleia. Die historische Rahmenhandlung ist ebenfalls aus Quellen kompiliert, z. B. Sokrates und Olympiodor bei Sozomenos, Gelasios von Kaisareia, eine Fastenquelle etc. bei Sokrates etc., vgl. für letzteren die Einleitung von G.C. Hansen (ed.), *Sokrates Kirchengeschichte*, GCS (Berlin 1995) XLIII–LV.

[79] Joachim Szidat, *Historischer Kommentar zu Ammianus Marcellinus, Buch XX–XXI. Teil III: Die Konfrontation* (Wiesbaden 1996) 27–29 erkennt in seiner Einleitung die Wichtigkeit der Parallelen bei Zonaras und anderen byzantinischen Autoren an, scheint aber eher davon auszugehen, diese Parallelen würden auf einen gemeinsamen Informationspool, auf „Nachrichten" zurückgehen.

er nur wenige Quellenstränge benutzt, diese aber in Exzerpte aufgeteilt, die dann in einem Hypomnema zusammengestellt worden sind,[80] bis er aus diesem Material einen neuen Bericht komponierte.

Die Benutzung von exzerpierten Autorenstücken läßt sich für die geographischen Exkurse Ammians, bei denen er Material, das großenteils durch Parallelüberlieferung bekannt ist, benutzt hat, *bekanntlich* mit Eindeutigkeit nachweisen.[81] Für die Zeitgeschichte kam—so unsere These—selbst für die Zeit der Regierung des Valentinian und des Valens über größere Strecken der historischen Erzählung keine grundsätzlich andere Technik zum Einsatz. Dieser Befund erstaunt und schockiert zunächst angesichts der Tatsache, daß Ammian als Zeitzeuge die Möglichkeit gehabt hätte, für die Gesamtheit seiner Erzählung zum Meister der Primärforschung zu werden. Daß er bisweilen in sein Hypomnema Archivstücke und Augenzeugenberichte einbringt, wird man nicht von der Hand weisen können, aber das Primärmaterial dürfe eine geringere Rolle gespielt haben, als landläufig angenommen. Als spätantiker Literat folgte er letztlich einem ganz anderen Verhaltensmuster als demjenigen, der modernen Spezialisten und Historikern der Spätantike gefallen hätte. Denn die Qualität eines Geschichtswerks wurde nicht nach der Originalität in der Zusammenstellung des historischen Materials beurteilt, sondern nach der künstlerischen Kraft, mit der man längst Bekanntes neu und poetisch gestaltete. Historiker müßten, so heißt es bei Lukian, ‚nicht danach suchen, was sie sagten, sondern wie sie es sagten'.[82] Vermutlich war etwa Olympiodor in viel höherem Grade ein Meister der Primärforschung als Ammian. Bezeichnenderweise ließ dieser selbst aber sein Geschichtswerk nicht als Geschichtswerk, sondern nur als „Material", als Vorarbeit für ein Geschichtswerk gelten.[83]

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[80] Vgl. zur Herstellung eines Textes Tiziano Dorandi, ‚Den Autoren über die Schulter geschaut. Arbeitsweise und Autographie bei den antiken Schriftstellern', *ZPE* 87 (1991) 11–33.

[81] Th. Mommsen, ‚Ammians Geographica', *Hermes* 16 (1881) 602–636. Zu neueren Arbeiten vgl. J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen 1995) 88 ff.; Jan Willem Drijvers, ‚Ammianus Marcellinus on the Geography of the Pontus Euxinus', *Histos* 2 (1998) = http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1998/drijvers.html; Hans Teitler, ‚Visa Vel Lecta? Ammianus on Persia and the Persians', in: Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and Its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York 1999) 216–223.

[82] Lukian, *hist. conscr.* 51. Dazu Hermann Peter, *Wahrheit und Kunst. Geschichtsschreibung und Plagiat im klassischen Altertum* (Leipzig/Berlin 1911) 431.

[83] Photius, *Bibl.* 80 pp. 166–167 = *Olympiodorus Testimonium* p. 153 Blockley.

# DER REFLEX DER SELBSTDARSTELLUNG DER VALENTINIANISCHEN DYNASTIE BEI AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS UND DEN KIRCHENHISTORIKERN

Hartmut Leppin

*Abstract*: The representation of the Valentinian dynasty differs in some regards from what is generally known about late antique emperors. This article argues that certain elements are reflected in Ammianus Marcellinus and, to a lesser degree, in the church historians. The first example is the accession of Valentinian and Valens to the throne: officially and in the works of the church historians, this was a straightforward step, based on a general consensus within Rome. Ammianus, however, depicts Valentinian as a hesitant candidate whose elevation is by no means safe, thereby turning his description into an ironic commentary of the proceedings. Secondly, both an important and unusual element of Valentinian representation was the idea that an emperor should possess some degree of experience of everyday life. Therefore, Ammianus' insistence on the low origin and lack of experience in Valens and Valentinian is not only an expression of his traditionalist attitude, but also an answer to this facet of imperial representation.

Die Selbstdarstellung spätantiker Kaiser scheint ein höchst unbefriedigendes Thema zu sein, da auf den ersten Blick die Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den verschiedenen Kaisern übergroß sind. Dies ist allerdings nur ein vordergründiger Eindruck. Bei genauem Zusehen zeigt sich, daß es durchaus bedeutungsträchtige Unterschiede in der Selbstdarstellung verschiedener Herrscher gibt. Auffällige Eigenheiten besitzt jene der valentinianischen Dynastie; sie würden eine eigene Abhandlung erfordern, für die reichlich Material zur Verfügung stünde: mehrere Reden des Themistios, die zeitgenössischen Breviarien, die Korrespondenz von Libanios und einigen christlichen Autoren, nicht zuletzt die Münzen und die Inschriften.

Innerhalb des vorgegebenen Rahmens kann ich jedoch nur bestimmte Aspekte behandeln und diese wiederum lediglich unter einem relativ engen Blickwinkel: Ich möchte zwei Fallstudien vorstellen, die eine, längere, zum Herrschaftsantritt von Valentinian und Valens, die zweite, kürzere, zu dem, was ich unter den Titel „Lebenserfahrung als

Kaisertugend" fassen möchte. Zudem geht es mir bei meinen Überlegungen weniger um die Selbstdarstellung selbst als um die Frage, wie bestimmte Züge der Selbstdarstellung der Valentinianer in unseren Quellen wahr- und aufgenommen wurden, hauptsächlich natürlich bei Ammian, aber da, wo es sinnvoll ist, werde ich einen Seitenblick auf andere Autoren, zumal die Kirchenhistoriker, werfen.

Dabei soll deutlich werden, in welchem Umfang die Selbstdarstellung der valentinianischen Dynastie das Geschichtswerk Ammians beeinflußt hat. Man sollte diesen Einfluß sicherlich nicht überbewerten, aber ihn an verschiedenen Stellen nachzuweisen könnte eine sinnvolle Aufgabe des Kommentars sein.[1] Dabei dürfte es indes weniger darum gehen, direkte Bezüge etwa zu bestimmten Panegyrikern nachzuweisen. Vielmehr sind die Panegyriker als Repräsentanten eines Diskurses zu nehmen, der sich, wie ich hoffe zeigen zu können, bei Ammian verschiedentlich gebrochen wiederfindet.[2] Zudem tragen solche Überlegungen zur Kontextualisierung des „lonely historian" bei und können damit den Verständnishorizont damaliger Leser besser erschließen.

## I. *Der Regierungsantritt*

Die Legitimation einer neuen Dynastie war immer heikel und mußte beim Herrschaftsantritt erkennbar werden. Im Falle Valentinians I. und seines Bruders Valens sind die Vorgänge ziemlich zuverlässig zu rekonstruieren und auch nicht ernsthaft strittig; es gibt keinen Zweifel daran, daß das Gerüst des Berichtes bei Ammian glaubhaft ist, zumal der Historiker in vielen Punkten durch die anderen Quellen bestätigt wird:[3]

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[1] Zum Einfluß der Panegyrik auf Ammians Geschichtsschreibung unter gattungsgeschichtlichen Gesichtspunkten etwa Hans Gärtner, *Einige Überlegungen zur kaiserzeitlichen Panegyrik und zu Ammians Charakteristik des Kaisers Julian*, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Nr. 10, Akademie der Wissenschaften und Literatur Mainz (Wiesbaden 1968). Grundlegend für das Verhältnis Ammians zu den Panegyrikern überhaupt Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris 1978) 321–366.

[2] Ich folge dem Diskursbegriff der sogenannten Cambridge School; vgl. dazu James Tully, *Meaning and Context. Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Princeton 1988).

[3] 26.1.3–2.11; 26.4.1–3. Grundlegend Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002) 21–25 (zum Datum 22, Anm. 53), der eine eher harmonisierende Deutung der Quellenzeugnisse vorschlägt; vgl. auch meine Rezension in *ZAC* 10 (2007) 366–368; siehe ferner Valerio Neri, ‚Ammiano Marcellino e l'elezione di Valentiniano', *RSA* 15 (1985) 153–182; Milena Raimondi, *Valentiniano I e la scelta dell'Oriente*, Studi di storia greca e romana 5

Nach dem überraschenden Tode Jovians einigten sich die führenden militärischen und zivilen Beamten (*civilium militiaeque rectores*)[4] in Nizäa auf Valentinian, der in Ankyra zurückgeblieben war. Man forderte ihn auf, eilends nachzukommen. Am 25. Februar wurde er gemäß einer inzwischen etablierten Tradition vom Heer ausgerufen. Das Drängen auf die Berufung eines zweiten Herrschers, das nach den Krisen, die die Todesfälle Julians und Jovians ausgelöst hatten, nur zu verständlich war, beantwortete Valentinian dilatorisch. Schließlich rief er am 28. März in einer Vorstadt Konstantinopels, die wohl zu Recht als das Hebdomon identifiziert wird, Valens zu seinem Mitherrscher aus. Anders als sein Bruder war dieser also primär durch die Einsetzung durch einen anderen Kaiser legitimiert.

Ammian bietet darüber dem Gestus nach einen nüchternen Bericht; doch viele Zwischentöne schwingen in seinen Äußerungen mit, die erst hörbar werden, wenn man sich vergegenwärtigt, wie dieses Ereignis in Milieus, die dem Kaiser nahe waren, dargestellt wurde.

Die Münzen nehmen auf die Herrschererhebung nicht direkt Bezug, sondern kommunizieren die üblichen Tugenden: Der Kaiser ist als Sieger gegeben; es finden sich Formeln wie *restitutor rei publicae*, *securitas rei publicae* oder *gloria Romanorum*.[5]

Weitaus detaillierter äußert sich Themistios in seiner Ende 364 in Konstantinopel vorgetragenen sechsten *oratio*. Mit ihr antwortete er in Anwesenheit des Kaisers vor dem Senat auf eine kaiserliche Rede. Sie bildet nur eine der sieben Reden des Themistios, in denen der Lobpreis des Valens eine größere Rolle spielt. Seine Panegyriken dürfen allerdings nicht einfach als Spiegel der Herrschaftsauffassung des Valens gelesen werden; vielmehr dient die Panegyrik der Kommunikation zwischen Herrscher und Untertanen, im Falle des Themistios vor allem der Senatoren des Ostens und des Hofes, einer Kommunikation, die keineswegs einseitig war. Das Lob, das ein solcher Redner vortrug, konnte durchaus auch Kritik beinhalten beziehungsweise die Erwar-

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(Alessandria 2001) 63–87; Cristian Olariu, ‚Datianus, Valentinian and the Rise of the Pannonian Faction', *Historia* 54 (2005) 351–354 ignoriert einen Teil der Quellen und der jüngeren Literatur.

[4] 26.1.3.

[5] Siehe die Angaben zu den verschiedenen Münzstätten in *RIC* 9. Vgl. Mark Humphries, *„Nec metu nec adulandi foeditate constricta.* The Image of Valentinian I from Symmachus to Ammianus', in: Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York 1999) 117–126, bes. 120; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 291.

tungen bestimmter Gruppen reflektieren, ohne notwendig der Auffassung des Gelobten in jeder Beziehung zu entsprechen.[6]

In der Passage über den Herrschaftsantritt[7] betont Themistios nachdrücklich, daß diese Einsetzung nicht durch das Votum der Soldaten, sondern durch den Willen Gottes zustande kommen sei:

> Ihr dürft nicht meinen, edle Männer, daß die Soldaten Herren einer so bedeutenden Wahl wären; vielmehr kommt diese Stimme von oben herab, von oben die Ausrufung—dies ist, so sagt Homer, der Wille des Zeus—und wird durch den Dienst der Menschen vollzogen.[8]

In dieser Partie formuliert Themistios ein Anliegen, das auch in seinen anderen Reden, nicht nur in jenen auf Valens, immer wieder zum Ausdruck kommt: Der Anspruch des Militärs soll zurückgedrängt werden. Der Kaiser soll seine Herrschaft weniger auf militärische Macht gründen als auf Tugend, wobei die Tugend nicht zum wenigsten in der Förderung der Philosophie und der Stadt Konstantinopel besteht, aber natürlich auch die üblichen Herrscherqualitäten wie Milde oder Gerechtigkeit einschließt. So folgt denn auch in dieser Rede Themistios gleich die Forderung, Valens und Valentinian sollten nicht den Waffen vertrauen, sondern der Tugend. Das göttliche Zeichen, das zu den Machtinsignien hinzukommen müsse, wolle Themistios suchen.

Dazu begibt er sich scheinbar auf einen Umweg, indem er den fundamentalen Unterschied in der Legitimation der beiden Brüder herausarbeitet:

> Die Ausrufung durch die Masse trägt das Ehrenvolle in sich, ebenso die durch einen, den Herrscher. Dies beides ist bei euch zusammengekommen. Hat der eine den Vorzug aufgrund der Masse, so hast du ihn durch den Herrscher, besser gesagt, ist das Votum der Masse zu dir gelangt.[9]

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[6] Vgl. Michael Mause, *Die Darstellung des Kaisers in der lateinischen Panegyrik*, Palingenesia 50 (Stuttgart 1994); Hartmut Leppin, ‚Einleitung', in: Ibidem und Werner Portmann, *Themistios, Staatsreden. Übersetzung mit Erläuterungen*, Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur 46 (Stuttgart 1998) 1–26; Mary Whitby (ed.), *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 1998).

[7] Them. *Or.* 6.73b–75. Übers. aus Themistios nach Leppin, Portmann, *Themistios, Staatsreden*. Zur Interpretation des Themistios siehe unten S. 46f.

[8] Them. *Or.* 6.73 c: Μὴ γὰρ οἴεσθε, ὦ γενναῖοι, τοὺς στρατιώτας κυρίους εἶναι τηλικαύτης χειροτονίας, ἀλλ' ἄνωθεν αὐτὴ κάτεισιν ἡ ψῆφος, ἄνωθεν ἡ ἀνάρρησις τελειοῦται—τοῦτο δέ φησιν Ὅμηρος, ἡ τοῦ Διὸς βουλή—ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων διακονίαις.

[9] Them. *Or.* 6.74 a: ἥ τε γὰρ παρὰ τοῦ πλήθους ἀνάρρησις τὸ ἔντιμον ἔχει ἥ τε παρ' ἑνὸς τοῦ κρατοῦντος. ἄμφω ταῦτα ἐφ' ὑμῶν συνδεδράμηκε. καὶ νικᾷ τῷ πλήθει μὲν ἄτερος, τῷ κρατοῦντι δὲ σύ, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ πλήθους ψῆφος εἰς σὲ περιήκει.

Und eben daraus gewinnt Themistios das Zeichen für die Tugendhaftigkeit: Die Geschwisterliebe—unter Herrscherbrüdern, wie die Zeitgenossen nur allzu gut wußten, keine Selbstverständlichkeit—prägt die beiden und ist ein Beweis, daß ihre Erhebung sich von Gott herleitet.

Das Modell der göttlichen Erhebung durch die Stimme der Soldaten ist ein klassischer Zug der Herrscherlegitimation.[10] Die Soldaten stehen in der Spätantike für das ganze Volk—Themistios variiert an einer Stelle sogar Soldaten mit „allen Menschen"[11]—und in ihrem einmütigen Votum drückt sich die Stimme Gottes aus; diese Form der Legitimation werden auch Valentinian und Valens für sich in Anspruch genommen haben. Die andere Form der Herrscherlegitimation bestand in der Einsetzung durch einen bereits regierenden Kaiser.

Das alles ist nicht originell und sollte es gewiß auch nicht sein, denn das Anliegen des Themistios war ein anderes: Aus dieser ganzen Passage klingen die durchaus nicht unberechtigten Sorgen, die Herrschaft der Valentinianer werde dem Militär einen übermäßigen Einfluß gewähren oder die Brüder könnten doch miteinander zerfallen. Um so wichtiger mußte es Themistios sein, an der Eindeutigkeit des göttlichen Votums keinen Zweifel aufkommen zu lassen.

Etwas später, 368/9, hielt wohl in Trier Symmachus seinen ersten Panegyrikus auf Valentinian, in dem er ebenfalls auf die Kaisererhebung zu sprechen kommt.[12] Eines hebt er sofort hervor: Die Wahl Valentinians erfolgte sofort, ohne Parteiengeschacher: *cessabat ambitus, quia dignus extabat*, wobei er im selben Abschnitt hervorhebt, daß man die Entscheidung herausgezögert und ihn absichtlich erst der Menge vorgestellt habe, damit nicht der Eindruck entstehe, man habe unbedacht gehandelt. Danach schildert er wortreich die Ausrufung durch das Heer, daß er recht kühn als *castrensis senatus* auffaßt.[13] Schließlich behauptet er sogar, daß Valentinian eine Art von *recusatio* geleistet habe, daß man ihn erst zur Annahme der Wahl habe drängen müssen.

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[10] Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.: Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret* (Göttingen 1996) 152–160 mit Literatur.

[11] Them. *Or.* 6.74 a: ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι.

[12] Symm. *Or.* 1.8–10.

[13] Zu dem Begriff Fanny del Chicca, *Quinti Aurelii Symmachi V.C. laudatio in Valentinianum Seniorem Augustum prior*. Einführung, Kommentar, Übersetzung (Rom 1984) 118–119; Angela Pabst, ‚Das Imperium Romanum im 4. Jh. im Spiegel der *orationes* des Q. Aurelius Symmachus', in: *Symmachus, Reden*, hg., übers. und erl. von Angela Pabst (Darmstadt 1989) 171–355, bes. 183–185.

Kehren wir vor diesem Hintergrund zurück zu dem Bericht Ammians über die Erhebung Valentinians. Die ist ganz im Gegenteil zu dem, was Themistios schildert, die Schilderung einer verzögerten Ausrufung, die, wie mir scheint, mit vielen ironischen Elementen gewürzt ist.[14] Die Auswahl des Kaisers liegt zunächst in den Händen einiger hoher Beamter, von denen mancher sich selbst nichtige Hoffnungen macht.[15] Ammian erwähnt zwei Namen, die gerüchteweise gehandelt werden, und nennt die Gründe für ihre Ablehnung: Der Tribun der *scutarii* Equitius sei ungeeignet, weil er als *asper* und *subagrestis* gelte.[16] Waren das nicht Eigenschaften, die auch Valentinian und Valens besaßen, wie die weitere Darstellung Ammians belegt? Ebenfalls gehandelt wird ferner, so heißt es noch in dieser Passage, ein Verwandter Jovians, Januarius, der für die Logistik des Militärs in Illyricum verantwortlich ist, doch von ihm heißt es, er sei zu weit weg.[17]

Dann einigt man sich auf einen Kandidaten, der ebenfalls nicht vor Ort ist, nämlich Valentinian. Zehn Tage dauert es, bis er beim Hauptteil des Heeres anlangt. Auch diese Entscheidung impliziert somit ein Interregnum. Laut Ammian liegt einer der Gründe, warum man sich für Valentinian entscheidet, darin, daß keiner sich widersetzt—gewiß kein Zeugnis für Enthusiasmus.[18] Immerhin ist jetzt, als man auf Valentinian aufmerksam wird, auch bei Ammian von einer göttlichen Eingebung die Rede,[19] also von dem Element, das bei Themistios so stark hervorgehoben worden war. Doch während sich diese bei dem Redner mit dem Heer verbindet, wird sie beim Historiker bei einem fragwürdig begründeten Einfall führender Beamter wirksam. Kann man das ernst nehmen? Ist das nicht eher ironisch gemeint? Auf keinen Fall ist dieses Element stark akzentuiert.

Die Entscheidung für Valentinian erscheint so wenig gesichert, daß einige Amtsträger sich alle Mühe geben müssen, um das Heer bei der

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[14] Anders Hans Teitler in diesem Band, seinerseits in Auseinandersetzung mit François Paschoud, ‚Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst und H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus* (Amsterdam 1992) 67–84; kritisch zu ihm auch Raimondi, *Valentiniano I*, 81–83, die die Möglichkeit einer Doppelbödigkeit von vornherein ausschließt.

[15] 26.1.3.

[16] 26.1.4. In 29.3.6 erscheint *subagrestis* auf Valentinian gemünzt.

[17] 26.1.4–5.

[18] *Nulla discordante sententia, nullo renitente* (26.1.5). In 30.7.4 erwähnt Ammian hingegen die Verdienste des Vaters als eine Grundlage der Karriere Valentinians und seine Tugenden als weitere Ursache der Ausrufung zum Kaiser.

[19] *Numinis aspiratione caelestis* (26.1.5).

Stange zu halten, und es handelt sich nicht einmal um besonders hohe Würdenträger, die hier Verantwortung übernehmen, sondern wieder um Equitius sowie um Leo, der unter Dagalaifus Rechnungsführer ist.[20] Als Valentinian endlich eintrifft, kommt es laut Ammian erneut zu einer Verzögerung. Denn der Prätendent lehnt es ab, sich am Interkalartag des Februar ausrufen zu lassen, da dieser unheilvoll sei—möglicherweise ist dies mit der von Symmachus hervorgehobenen *recusatio* in Verbindung zu bringen. So müssen für die letzte Nacht des Interregnums sorgfältigste Maßnahmen getroffen werden, daß nicht etwa doch noch ein anderer ausgerufen werde.[21] Offenbar ist, wenn man dem Tenor dieser Darstellung folgt, Valentinian von sich aus kein hinreichend überzeugender Kandidat.

Am nächsten Morgen ersteigt Valentinian endlich das Tribunal, wo er zunächst durch den Willen der Anwesenden zum *rector* ausgerufen, sodann mit den kaiserlichen Insignien ausgestattet und als *Augustus* begrüßt wird,[22] unter einem Jubel, den Ammian nicht auf göttliche Eingebung oder die Überzeugung der Soldaten zurückführt, sondern auf die *dulcedo novitatis*.[23] Und wieder kommt es zu einer Verzögerung: Als Valentinian seine vorbereitete Rede vortragen möchte, erhebt sich ein Murren derer, die nach einem zweiten Kaiser verlangen. Die Stimmung schlägt um, ein *tumultus* droht, doch Valentinian vermag sich im Vertrauen auf seine neue Rolle durchzusetzen; er hat sich, kommentiert Ammian, bereits als *terribilis* erwiesen und in diesem Sinne jetzt endlich auch als geeignet für das kaiserliche Amt.[24]

Obgleich ich keinen starken Grund habe, daran zu zweifeln, daß die verschiedenen Verzögerungen, die Ammian schildert, historisch sind, so setzt er sie doch als ein darstellerisches Mittel ein, das die Erhebung Valentinians zu einem zögerlichen, von keinerlei Enthusiasmus für den Kandidaten getragenen Prozeß macht. Zwar bestreitet Ammian nicht, daß Valentinian dem Amt gewachsen sei, aber im Verlauf seines Berichtes wird dem Leser deutlich, daß geeignetere Kandidaten denkbar gewesen wären.

Diese skeptische Tendenz setzt sich im folgenden fort: Mit der Rede, die Valentinian bei Ammian hält[25] und mit der es ihm gelingt, die

[20] 26.1.6.
[21] 26.2.1.
[22] Diese Szenen in Amm. 26.2.1–5.
[23] 26.2.3.
[24] 26.2.11.
[25] 26.2.6–10.

widerborstigen Soldaten auf seine Seite zu ziehen, kündigt der Kaiser an, einen geeigneten, erprobten Mitkaiser zu erheben, nach dem er sich sorgsam umschauen werde; er erweckt sogar den Eindruck, einen *alienus* bedenken zu wollen.

Die hier aufgebaute Erwartung erfüllt sich gerade nicht. Zwar hört Valentinian sich zum Schein nach einem geeigneten Kandidaten um, doch bekommt er von Dagalaifus genau den Ratschlag, den er nicht hören will—nämlich nicht auf einen Verwandten zu setzen—,[26] und erhebt doch seinen Bruder zum Mitkaiser. Die universale Zustimmung, die für die Kaisererhebung nötig war und die Ammian durchaus erwähnt (*universorum sententiis concinentibus*), wird bei Valens dadurch gebrochen, Ammian hinzufügt, keiner habe gewagt, sich zu widersetzen (*nec enim audebat quisquam refragari*).[27] Und die Teilhaberschaft an der Herrschaft wird gleich so umgedeutet, daß Valens als *apparitor* Valentinians erscheint. Es ist also ein Regierungsantritt der Mißverständnisse, der Täuschungen, auch der Drohungen, den Ammian nachzeichnet. Dies wird noch deutlicher, wenn man ihn mit den übrigen Herrschaftsantritten, von denen er ausführlicher spricht, ver gleicht:[28]

Als 355 jemand zum Caesar berufen werden soll, argumentiert die Kaiserin Eusebia ausdrücklich, daß ein Verwandter herangezogen werden müsse, und nach reiflicher Überlegung entscheidet man sich für Julian, den Constantius II. selbst vorgeschlagen hatte.[29] Als der Kaiser das den versammelten Truppen darlegen möchte, unterbrechen diese ihn in ihrer Begeisterung, und die Masse ruft, dies sei ein Beschluß der höchsten Gottheit (*summum numen*); zur Freude des Heeres wird Julian zum Caesar ernannt.[30] Und nach einer Rede, die Constantius an Julian richtet, ertönt lauter, aber nicht zu lauter Jubel.[31]

Ganz bestimmt vom Drängen der Soldaten ist dann die Ausrufung Julians zum Augustus. Als sie sich durch die Befehle des Constan-

[26] 26.4.1.
[27] 26.4.3.
[28] Zu knapp für unsere Zwecke ist die Schilderung der Erhebung des Silvanus in Amm. 15.5.16. E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 119–120. sieht in den wiederholten Reden zum Herrschaftsantritt einen Beleg für einen Planwechsel Ammians; m.E. sind gerade die intratextuellen Bezüge gewollt und von zentraler Bedeutung.
[29] 15.8.1–4.
[30] 15.8.9–11.
[31] 15.8.15–16.

tius zur Truppengestellung provoziert fühlen, stürmen sie in Paris von sich aus zum Palast Julians, um ihn zum Augustus auszurufen. Dieser tut alles, um sie von ihrem Unterfangen abzubringen, sieht sich aber schließlich gezwungen, ihnen nachzugeben, und wird mit improvisierten Insignien—von zweifelhafter Vorbedeutung—versehen.[32]

Als eine von Pannen begleitete Wahl erscheint hingegen jene Jovians.[33] Jovian ist ein Notkandidat, da die verschiedenen Parteien sich streiten und Salutius, auf den man sich schließlich geeinigt hat, das kaiserliche Amt ablehnt: Nicht eigene Verdienste empfehlen Jovian, sondern die seines Vaters. Einige akklamieren ihn nur, weil sie wähnen, es gehe doch wieder um Julian. Nach dem blinden Urteil des Schicksals sei dies alles geschehen, befindet Ammian.[34]

Diese Kaisererhebungen sind in der erhaltenen Darstellung Ammians jener von Valentinian und Valens vorausgegangen. Die intratextuellen Bezüge zeigen sehr deutlich, daß die Erhebung Valentinians und Valens' nicht den Ansprüchen Ammians genügt. Sie ist das Ergebnis von Plänen, die hohe Beamte ausgeheckt haben und deren Überzeugungskraft sie selbst nicht trauen, die enthusiastische Zustimmung der Soldaten fehlt.

Daß es noch schlimmer kommen kann, zeigt die schon oft behandelte Usurpation des Procopius, der zwar eine gewisse dynastische Legitimation besaß,[35] aber sich gleich bei seinem ersten angsterfüllten Auftritt, der von keinerlei Beifall des Volkes begleitet war, als ungeeignet erweist.[36]

Der Ausrufung Valentinians fehlte, das zeigt die Darstellung Ammians deutlich, ein zentrales Element, der göttlich gewirkte, spontane, aus innerer Überzeugung erwachsene Konsens der Soldaten, ein Element, das üblicherweise zu einer Kaisererhebung gehörte und das Themistios als Panegyriker selbstverständlich hervorgehoben hatte.[37] Noch ein zweites Element, das in der Rede des Konstantinopolitaners auf-

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[32] 20.4.14–18.
[33] 25.5.1–7.
[34] 25.5.8.
[35] 26.6.1.
[36] 26.6.15–18. Diese Passage weist bemerkenswerte Parallelen zu Themistios' 7. Rede auf; einiges dazu bei R.C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus. A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (Brüssel 1975) 97; Sabbah, *La méthode*, 359–364; Franz Josef Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens und die heidnische Opposition* (Bonn 1995) 3–35.
[37] Zu Ammians Vorstellungen von Kaiserlegitimation siehe Robin Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Seven Studies in his Language and Thought* (Columbia 1986) 110–117.

taucht, wird von Ammian ironisiert, die Bruderliebe. Es besteht eben, wie der Historiker durchblicken läßt, faktisch ein Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zwischen beiden Brüdern.

Mit diesen Bemerkungen will ich natürlich nicht sagen, daß Ammian direkt auf Themistios[38] oder (was wohl eher denkbar wäre)[39] Symmachus repliziert habe. Vielmehr reagiert er auf gewisse Ideologeme der Valentinianer, die sicherlich in einer Vielzahl von Medien publik gemacht worden waren, unter denen aus literarischen Gründen oder einfach dank dem Zufall der Überlieferung gerade Themistios erhalten ist. Und diese Reaktion steht nicht im Zentrum der Darstellung Ammians, die vielmehr nachzeichnen möchte, von welchen Hindernissen der Machtantritt Valentinians begleitet war, aber auch, wie er seine erste Bewährungsprobe angesichts der Forderung nach einem zweiten Helfer bestand. Doch die Anspielungen auf die Selbstdarstellung, die für die zeitgenössische Leserschaft auch unter Theodosius I. sicherlich leicht zu dekodieren waren, machen einen Teil ihres Reizes aus.

Weitaus weniger nuanciert sind die Berichte über Valentinians Erhebung bei den Kirchenhistorikern,[40] die der offiziösen Version näherstehen als Ammian. Sokrates, der ihr besonders verpflichtet ist,[41] berichtet von der κοινὴ ψῆφος der Soldaten am siebten Tag nach dem Tode Jovians. Dreißig Tage nach seiner eigenen Ausrufung erhebt er in Konstantinopel seinen Bruder zum Herrscher—von den Protesten der Sol-

[38] Zu dieser Möglichkeit Sabbah, *La méthode*, 348–366. Skeptisch John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 509, Anm. 17 und 29.

[39] Vgl. dazu Sabbah, *La méthode*, 332–346, dessen Deutung stark von der Vorstellung bestimmt ist, daß Ammian eine Opposition gegen Theodosius repräsentiere; ferner Humphries, *„Nec metu nec adulandi foeditate constricta*'—allerdings ist es nicht überraschend, daß die Siegesideologie in den Reden des Symmachus reflektiert wird (p. 120), denn das gehörte zu den selbstverständlichen Elementen der Panegyrik. Del Chicca, *Quinti Aurelii Symmachi V.C. Laudatio*, 13 f., meint an verschiedenen Stellen eine Benutzung des Symmachus durch Ammianus zu erkennen, doch sind die Stellen nicht spezifisch genug, um den Rekurs auf einen bestimmten Autor nachzuweisen.

[40] Vgl. allgemein Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.*, 91–104, 152–160.

[41] Socr. *HE* 4.1.1–5; vgl. Franz Geppert, *Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sokrates Scholasticus*, Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche 3.4 (Leipzig 1898) 69–75, der eine Quelle mit biographischer Ausrichtung dahinter vermutet, die bis zum Ende der valentinianischen Dynastie gereicht habe. Das würde immerhin zu dem offiziösen Charakter der Passage passen; vgl. zur mutmaßlichen Quelle für chronikalische Partien Peter van Nuffelen, ‚Socrate de Constantinople et les chroniques', *JÖByz* 54 (2004) 53–75, insbesondere 65–70.

daten, die ihm gleich zu Beginn einen Kollegen abzuverlangen versuchten, ist gar nicht die Rede. Entscheidend für den Kirchenhistoriker war natürlich die für Ammians Geschichtsschreibung marginale Frage der religiösen Orientierung der Herrscher. Bei diesem Thema kann er wiederum nicht vermeiden, den Unterschied hervorzuheben: Valentinian ist in seinen Augen Nizäner, Valens Arianer, und das prägt die ganze weitere Darstellung. Doch mit der für ihn charakteristischen und für den modernen Forscher so hilfreichen mangelhaften Durchdringung des Stoffes hat Sokrates eine Notiz bewahrt, die für die Selbstdarstellung der Valentinianer ohne Zweifel von wesentlicher Bedeutung war: Beide, Valens und Valentinian, traten, so behauptet er, unter Julian als Bekenner hervor; die beiden anderen sogenannten synoptischen Kirchenhistorikern, die bekanntlich den Stoff intensiver durcharbeiteten als Sokrates, gönnen diese mutige Tat nur noch Valentinian.[42]

Sozomenus bietet zunächst nur einen kurzen Bericht über die Ausrufung Valentinians, die auch bei ihm einfach durch die Soldaten erfolgt, woran er eine positive Charakterisierung Valentinians als Bekenner anschließt, illustriert durch eine Anekdote, die sich bei Sokrates nicht findet, wohl aber in der sonstigen christlichen Tradition.[43]

Danach wiederum kommt Sozomenus zu einer etwas genaueren Beschreibung der Vorgänge und hebt hervor, daß Valentinian nach dem Ratschlag der Soldaten *und* der Inhaber hoher Ämter, also mit den Stimmen aller, zum Kaiser erhoben worden sei.[44] Es folgt der Bericht über die Forderung der Soldaten nach einem zweiten Herrscher, die von Valentinian souverän zurückgewiesen, aber schließlich eben durch die Erhebung des Valens erfüllt wird.[45] In diesem zweiten Teil seines Berichtes benutzt er offenbar eine mit Ammian eher vergleichbare Quelle, zeigt aber vor allem Berührungen mit Philostorg, der seinerseits

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[42] Socr. *HE* 4.1.8; vgl. 3.13.4; siehe zum homöischen Hintergrund dieser Überlieferung H.C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer. Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche* (Tübingen 1988) 126–127; vgl. aber auch die eventuelle Anspielung in Ambr. *Ep.* 75 (21), 3.

[43] Soz. *HE* 6.6.2–6; vgl. Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.*, 96; Noel Lenski, ‚Were Valentinian, Valens and Jovian Confessors before Julian the Apostate?', *ZAC* 6 (2002) 253–276. Den Versuch, Amm. 23.1.6 damit zu verbinden—so Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 52—halte ich nicht für überzeugend.

[44] Soz. *HE* 6.6.7.

[45] Soz. *HE* 6.6.8 f.

stärker ins Detail geht.[46] Doch von der subtilen Kritik, die bei Ammian anklingt, ist hier genauso wenig spürbar wie bei Sokrates.

Unter den drei sogenannten synoptischen Kirchenhistorikern ist Theodoret derjenige, der am stärksten stilisiert und die Figuren am schärfsten profiliert. Valentinian ist bei ihm eine unzweideutig positive Gestalt,[47] deren Bekennertum unter Julian er im Kern ähnlich schildert wie Sozomenus, aber mit eindringlichen Dramatisierungen—Valentinian versetzt einem unglücklichen Tempeldiener, der ihn mit geweihtem Wasser besprengt, sogar einen Fausthieb.[48]

Die Erhebung Valentinians führt Theodoret wieder ganz auf das Heer zurück, das ihn sofort als eine herausragende Herrschergestalt identifiziert, die der Kirchenhistoriker selbst mit nachgerade panegyrischen Tönen preist.[49] Es folgt der Bericht über den Appell der Soldaten, einen Teilhaber der Herrschaft zu benennen, die souveräne Zurückweisung der Forderung und schließlich die Ausrufung des Valens, die Theodoret sogleich tadelt (ὡς οὐκ ὤφελεν).[50] Doch findet er rasch eine Erklärung für diesen Fehler des—in seiner Darstellung sonst so überragenden und sich eindeutig zum Nizänertum bekennenden—Kaisers: Valens habe die verdorbenen Lehren noch nicht empfangen.[51] Um diese Behauptung plausibel zu machen, berichtet Theodoret folgendes: Valens sei bei Herrschaftsantritt durch die apostolischen Lehren ausgezeichnet gewesen.[52] Angesichts des Angriffs der Goten habe er die Taufe empfangen wollen, ein Ansinnen, das Theodoret natürlich lobt. Doch sei es Valens ergangen wie Adam: Er habe sich den Worten seiner Frau unterworfen, die schon vorher ein Opfer Arianismus geworden sei und nun ihren Mann erjagt habe, der von dem Konstantinopolitaner Bischof Eudoxios die Taufe empfangen habe.

Das alles schildert Theodoret in einer erhabenen Sprache—wohl nicht ganz zufällig als einziger Quellenautor. Angesichts dieser Tatsache sowie des topischen Charakters der Erzählung—die Verführung durch die Frau—, nicht zuletzt auch, weil der Wunsch des Autors,

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[46] Philost. *HE* 8.8. Zur strittigen Frage einer Benutzung Philostorgs durch Sozomenus siehe G.C. Hansen, ‚Einleitung', in: Ibidem (ed.), *Sozomenus, Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 4 (Berlin 1995²) LIII–LV (der für eine gemeinsame Quelle, die entweder ein arianischer Historiograph oder ein säkularer Historiker gewesen sein könne, plädiert).

[47] Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.*, 91–95.

[48] Thdt. *HE* 3.16.1–3.

[49] Thdt. *HE* 4.6.1 f.

[50] Thdt. *HE* 4.6.3.

[51] Thdt. *HE* 4.6.3.

[52] Thdt. *HE* 4.12–13.1.

Valentinian von allen Fehlern reinzuwaschen, unverkennbar ist, scheint mir diese Episode nicht glaubhaft, sondern eine reine Konstruktion, wie man sie bei Theodoret so oft findet, etwa bei der Herrschaftserhebung Theodosius des Großen.[53]

Schließlich zum ältesten einigermaßen faßbaren nach-eusebianischen Kirchenhistoriker, Philostorg,[54] der wie auch sonst an vielen Stellen eine beachtliche Nähe zu Ammian aufweist.[55] Auch er beginnt mit der Ausrufung des neuen Kaisers durch das Heer, wendet sich aber dann jenen Personen zu, die im Hintergrund wirkten, den hohen Beamten: Der Patrizier Datianus, den man als einen Vertrauten des Constantius und Consul des Jahres 358 kennt, habe den Hinweis auf Valentinian in Briefform gegeben; ihn erwähnt Ammian in diesem Kontext nicht. Ferner nennt Philostorg als einen Unterstützer den Prätoriumspräfekten Salutius Secundus, der bei Ammian erst später als derjenige erscheint, der am Vorabend der Ausrufung Valentinians allen potentiellen Rivalen verbietet, am nächsten Morgen in die Öffentlichkeit zu gehen.[56] Darüber hinaus begegnen bei dem Kirchenhistoriker als Unterstützer der spätere Heermeister Arintheus sowie Dagalaifus, der hier als Kommandeur der *domestici* erscheint, bei Ammian aber (sicherlich zu Recht) als *magister equitum*.[57] Doch schwerwiegender ist ein anderer Unterschied: Bei Ammian sind diejenigen, die dafür sorgen, daß die Erhebung Valentinians problemlos über die Bühne geht, wie erwähnt, der Tribun der *scutarii* Equitius und Leo, ein Untergebener Dagalaifus, also eher untergeordnete Würdenträger.

Man könnte den Eindruck gewinnen, daß Philostorg beziehungsweise seine Quelle einfach die wichtigsten Amtsträger beim damaligen Heere benannt hat, um die Legitimität der Wahl Valentinians zu unterstreichen.[58] In diese Richtung weist auch der Fehler bei der

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[53] Vgl. etwa Hartmut Leppin, *Theodosius der Große. Auf dem Weg zu einem christlichen Imperium* (Darmstadt 2003) 40–43.

[54] Philost. *HE* 8.8.

[55] Zum komplexen Hintergrund vgl. den Beitrag von Bruno Bleckmann, bes. S. 16–19, 22–24; siehe ferner H.C. Brennecke, ‚Christliche Quellen des Ammianus Marcellinus?', *ZAC* 1 (1997) 226–250.

[56] 26.2.1.

[57] Raimondi, *Valentiniano I*, 65, Anm. 31.

[58] Neri, ‚Ammiano Marcellino e l'elezione di Valentiniano', 155f. weist zu Recht darauf hin, daß Victor fehlt. Joseph Bidez, ‚Einleitung', in: Ibidem (ed.), *Philostorg, Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 21 (Berlin 1981[3]) CXXXIV–V scheint anzunehmen, daß der Brief des Datianus Philostorg zumindest indirekt zur Verfügung gestanden habe; das bleibt aber spekulativ.

Amtsbezeichnung Dagalaifus, die gegen die Benutzung einer zeitnahen Urkunde spricht. Ammian hingegen führt wohl wieder im Bestreben, den etwas beliebigen Charakter der Entscheidung deutlich werden zu lassen, nachgeordnete Offiziere an.

Angesichts des Schein-Offiziösen und Erwartbaren in der Darstellung Philostorgs, scheinen mir jedenfalls Zweifel an der Historizität der Überlieferung mindestens berechtigt; sie einfach mit der Darstellung Ammians zu harmonisieren ist dagegen problematisch.[59] Es folgt bei Philostorg dann das Übliche: die Forderung des Heeres nach einem Teilhaber, seine souveräne Zurückweisung und die Ausrufung des Valens.

Trotz aller Unterschiede zeigt sich bei den Kirchenhistorikern in wichtigen Punkten ein einheitliches Bild: Keiner der vier, nicht einmal der detailfreudige Philostorg, beschreibt die Erhebung Valentinians als einen Vorgang mit Verzögerungen; alle betonen die Einmütigkeit der Soldaten, auch wenn sie von Gottes Wirken nicht explizit sprechen. Keiner berichtet davon, daß jemand aus der Entourage des Kaisers von Valens abgeraten habe. So stehen ihre Berichte der Selbstdarstellung der Valentinianer erheblich näher als jener Ammians, sind aber natürlich ihrerseits durch ganz andere Darstellungsintentionen, der Frage der Gläubigkeit, namentlich der Rechtgläubigkeit, bestimmt. Der Reflex der Selbstdarstellung ist somit bei all diesen vorhanden, die Reaktion bei Ammian—und das kann nicht überraschen—am subtilsten.

## II. *Lebenserfahrung als Kaisertugend*

Irgendwann nach seiner Erhebung zum Augustus hielt Valens eine Rede, mit der er manchen im Senat überrascht, wenn nicht schockiert haben muß. Themistios referiert sie:

> Zum Nutzen der Untertanen sei es … erforderlich, daß die Herrscher zuvor selbst gearbeitet hätten, daß sie in einer Umgebung ohne Schmeichelei, aber mit vielen Mühen herangezogen seien, daß sie Landbau betrieben, daß sie öffentliche Pflichten erfüllt, unter freiem Himmel gelebt, daß sie Kriegsdienst getan hätten, daß sie in der Unannehmlichkeit des menschlichen Lebens aufgewachsen seien wie Kyros, wie Dareios,

[59] Gemeinhin folgt man ihr; siehe etwa Neri, ‚Ammiano Marcellino e l'elezione di Valentiniano'; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 21.

> wie Numa, wie die berühmtesten Römer. Ferner sei es eine schlimmere Krankheit für die Herrschaft, wenn die Untertanen Ohrenbläsern statt Barbaren ausgeliefert seien.[60]

Themistios erklärt dazu: ‚Das alles, was ich gesagt habe, stammt aus dem Allerheiligsten der Akademie'[61]—doch diese Lehren hat er sonst ganz anders interpretiert; was hier gesagt wird, ist spezifisch für die Reden auf Valens und seine Verwandten.

Gerade die Schwierigkeiten, die diese Passage für den erfahrenen Redner aufwirft, sprechen dafür, daß das Referat, das Themistios von den Äußerungen des Valens gibt, zutreffend ist. In dessen Worten hallt das Selbstbewußtsein des pannonischen Aufsteigers wieder, der eben selbst gearbeitet hat und persönlich im Felde gestanden hat, aber auch der Trotz gegenüber den vornehmen Herren des Senats, von denen viele eine ganz andere Sozialisation erfahren hatten und jemanden wie ihn eigentlich nicht ernst nahmen. Die Vorstellung von der Bedeutung der eigenen Arbeit, der harten Lebenserfahrung gehörte offenbar zum Kernbestand der Selbstdarstellung der Valentinianer, während es in der Panegyrik sonst üblich war, solche Peinlichkeiten zu verschweigen.[62] Valens geht mit dieser Selbstdarstellung, die Lebenserfahrung als Kaisertugend wertet und die zumindest in den frühen Jahren der Valentinianer eine hohe Virulenz besessen haben muß, in die Offensive gegenüber den Verächtern seiner niedrigen Herkunft.

Themistios, dessen übrige Reden dieses Motiv bezeichnenderweise nicht kennen, spricht in seinen Reden auf Angehörige der valentinianischen Dynastie immer wieder davon, wobei er dazu neigt, das Thema in eine Richtung zu verschieben, die den Panegyrikern vertrauter war:[63] Er lobt die persönliche Ausdauer und Leidensfähigkeit des Valens bei militärischen Aktionen—eine Widerstandskraft gegen die Härten der Natur, für die man gerne Alexander den Großen als Vorbild zitierte

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[60] Them. *Or.* 6.81 b: Καὶ γὰρ ὅτι πρὸς τῶν ἀρχομένων ἐστὶν αὐτουργοὺς πρότερον γεγενῆσθαι τοὺς βασιλέας, ἀκολακεύτῳ καὶ ἐπιπόνῳ τροφῇ τεθραμμένους, γεωργήσαντας, λειτουργήσαντας, θυραυλήσαντας, στρατευσαμένους, ἐναυξηθέντας τῇ δυσχερείᾳ τοῦ βίου τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου, ὡς Κῦρος, ὡς Δαρεῖος, ὡς Νομᾶς, ὡς Ῥωμαίων οἱ δοκιμώτατοι, καὶ ὅτι χαλεπώτερον νόσημα τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῖς συκοφάνταις ἐκκεῖσθαι τοὺς ὑπηκόους ἢ τοῖς βαρβάροις.

[61] Them. *Or.* 6.81 c: ταῦτα ἅπαντα, ἅπερ εἶπον, ἐκ τῶν ἀδύτων τῆς Ἀκαδημίας.

[62] Vgl. die Empfehlungen von Men. Rhet. 369.18–371.14, bes. 370.9–14; ferner Lukas de Blois, ‚The Εἰς βασιλέα of Ps.-Aelius Aristides', *GRBS* 27 (1986) 279–288, bes. 281–282; Mause, *Die Darstellung des Kaisers*, 63.

[63] Them. *Or.* 8.119b–d, 10.134a–b; 11.149b–d.

und die von dem Gedanken der Lebenserfahrung zu unterscheiden ist.[64] Doch in der 369 gehaltenen Rede auf den Sohn des Valens, Valentinian Galates, unterstreicht er, daß dieser Junge in den Mühen des Lagers aufgezogen wird:

> Obwohl du noch in den Armen getragen wirst, bist du mit deinem Vater Soldat und Feldherr. Er zieht dich nicht groß, indem er dich in Frauengemächern Schlaf halten läßt, nicht beim Fett und Mark der Schafe, sondern indem du an der Donau und bei den skythischen Wintern dasselbe ißt und dasselbe trinkst wie dein Vater und die Soldaten.[65]

In der wohl auf 376 zu datierenden Rede auf Gratian erwähnt Themistios zudem, auf diesen Prinzen gemünzt, daß Armut Weisheit hervorbringe.[66]

Auch bei Symmachus klingt dieses Motiv durch, wenn er—der kriegsferne Senator und Vertreter der Stadt Rom—erklären muß, daß nicht die *otiosi*,[67] sondern tüchtige Kämpfer den Kaiser erheben sollen.[68] Er betont, daß Valentinian schon früh den *usus laboris* erreicht habe, und auch bei ihm wird die breite Lebenserfahrung als Zeichen der Eignung für das kaiserliche Amt beschworen.[69]

Die Beharrung auf diesem Motiv ist um so bemerkenswerter, weil Themistios es in seinen Reden auf die anderen Kaiser nicht anführt. Es ist also speziell auf diese Dynastie ausgerichtet. Er muß sich hier offen-

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[64] Der Kontext ist natürlich jener des Leistungsprinzips, das grundsätzlich für die Selbstdarstellung römischer Herrscher wichtig war, siehe dazu Lothar Wickert, ‚Princeps', *RE* 22.2 (1954) 2203–2294 (vgl. Del Chicca, *Quinti Aurelii Symmachi V.C. Laudatio*, 53–54), doch der Aspekt der persönlichen Lebenserfahrung auch in niedrigen Tätigkeiten scheint mir ungewöhnlich zu sein.

[65] Them. *Or.* 9.121a–b: Ἔτι δὲ ἐν ἀγκάλαις περιφερόμενος συστρατεύῃ τῷ πατρὶ καὶ συστρατηγεῖς καὶ τρέφει σε οὐκ ἐν θάλάμοις κατακοιμίζων, οὐδ' ἐν δημῷ προβάτων καὶ μυελῷ, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ Ἴστρῳ καὶ τοῖς χειμῶσι τοῖς Σκυθικοῖς τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ σιτία σιτούμενον καὶ ποτὰ πίνοντα τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τοῖς στρατιώταις; vgl. ebd. c–d. Vgl. dagegen das Lob auf Varronianus Them. *Or.* 5.71 b; oder die Bemerkungen zu Arcadius 16.213a–b, 18.224b–225c. Daß das Motiv noch unter Theodosius I. sogar in der Rede eines Senators eine gewisse Resonanz haben konnte, zeigt *Pan. Lat.* 12 (Pacatus) 9.4–7.

[66] Them. *Or.* 13.164 b; mit Bezug auf Euripides *Frg.* 641.3 (Kannicht).

[67] Pabst, ‚Das Imperium Romanum im 4. Jh.', 184 bezieht die Wendung zu Recht auf die römische Volksversammlung; vgl. auch Del Chicca, *Quinti Aurelii Symmachi V.C. Laudatio*, 117–118.

[68] Symm. *Or.* 1.9.

[69] Symm. *Or.* 1.1. Zur gerade in Senatskreisen virulenten Kritik an Aufsteigern siehe nur etwa Andreas Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire. The Clash between the Senate and Valentinian I* (Oxford 1952) 96–124.

bar dem—wie auch immer artikulierten—Wunsch der Kaiser beugen; das Motiv war zu zentral, als daß der Panegyriker hier Lizenzen hätte haben können.[70]

Für Ammians Bild der Kaiser spielt die niedrige Herkunft der beiden und ihrer Umgebung durchaus eine Rolle.[71] An einer Stelle rückt Ammian die *ruditas* in die Nähe der Empfänglichkeit des Valens für die verderblichen Ratschläge von Schmeichlern,[72] negiert also gerade jene Verbindung, die Valens in seiner Rede gezogen hatte. Doch ist der Zusammenhang hier nicht besonders eng. Deutlicher ist ein Ausruf Ammians im Kontext seines Berichts über die Majestätsprozesse:

> Du herrliche Bildung in den philosophischen Lehren, die durch ein Geschenk des Himmels den Glücklichen gewährt ist und die du selbst lastervolle Charaktere oft gebildet hast! Wie viel hättest du in jener dunklen Zeit verbessern können, wenn es Valens gestattet gewesen wäre, dank dir zu wissen, daß Herrschaft nichts anderes sei, wie es die Weisen definieren, als die Fürsorge für die Sorge der Untertanen und daß es Aufgabe eines guten Staatenlenkers ist, seine Macht zu zügeln, der Gier nach allen Dingen und den unversöhnlichen Zornesausbrüchen zu widerstehen.[73]

Die mangelnde Bildung des Valens begründet hier seine Grausamkeit, das Verderben seiner Untertanen, während Valens hervorgehoben hatte, daß gerade die ganz andere Sozialisation, die er erfahren hatte, dem Nutzen der Untertanen diene. Ob dies eine direkte Antwort auf die Selbstdarstellung des Valens ist, steht dahin, denn die Frage der Bildung spielt auch sonst für Ammian bekanntlich eine wesentliche Rolle.

Eine subtilere Auseinandersetzung mit der Gedanken der Lebenserfahrung findet an anderer Stelle statt, nämlich in der Rede, die Valentinian bei der Ausrufung Gratians zum Augustus hält: Valentinian war so schwer erkrankt, daß man sich in seiner Umgebung Gedanken über

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[70] Zum Problem der Themistios-Interpretation siehe oben S. 35f.

[71] Vgl. etwa Amm. 26.8.2; 29.1.11; 31.14.5, 8. Zos. 3.36.2 hebt die Unbildung allerdings sogleich hervor, was offenkundig als Polemik gegen das christliche Bekenntnis zu verstehen ist, siehe François Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime* (Paris 1976) 16f. Bei den Kirchenhistorikern hat die Ideologie der Lebenserfahrung, wenn ich recht sehe, keine Bedeutung. Daher bleiben sie hier beiseite.

[72] 27.5.8.

[73] 29.2.18: *O praeclara informatio doctrinarum munere caelesti indulta felicibus, quae vel vitiosas naturas saepe excoluisti! quanta in illa caligine temporum correxisses, si Valenti scire per te licuisset nihil aliud esse imperium, ut sapientes definiunt, nisi curam salutis alienae bonique esse moderatoris restringere potestatem, resistere cupiditati omnium rerum et implacabilibus iracundiis.* Übers. aus Ammian nach Wolfgang Seyfarth.

seine Nachfolge machte und bereits zwei Kandidaten ventilierte.[74] Als Valentinian sich erholte, entschloß er sich, seinen Sohn Gratian, an den man laut Ammian nicht gedacht hatte, zum Augustus zu erheben, und der Historiker läßt ihn eine Rede halten, die verrät, daß er das Konzept der Lebenserfahrung als Teil der kaiserlichen Selbstdarstellung gut kennt.[75] Valentinian stellt Gratian als seinen Sohn mit folgenden Worten vor:

> Nicht wie wir hat er von der Wiege her eine harte Erziehung genossen, er ist nicht beim Ertragen harter Umstände herangewachsen und ist noch nicht dem Staub des Krieges gewachsen, wie ihr seht.[76]

Diesem wenig verheißungsvollen Beginn folgt die Ankündigung, daß Gratian im Einklang mit dem Ruhm seiner Vorfahren reifen werde, er werde aber auch dank seiner Bildung Urteilsfähigkeit erwerben und als Militär sich durch das Ertragen von Strapazen bewähren.

Dies wird von den Soldaten beifällig aufgenommen, so daß Valentinian sich direkt an Gratian wendet—auch Constantius hatte ja Julian noch einmal direkt angesprochen—und ihn auffordert, sich den Mühen des Soldatenlebens auszusetzen.[77] Wieder erhebt sich Beifall und Ammian beschließt den Bericht mit der Feststellung, daß Gratian ein hervorragender Kaiser geworden wäre, wenn sein Schicksal und seine Umgebung das zugelassen hätten.[78]

Ammian läßt somit in dieser Passage Valentinian selbst zwei Formen der Herrscherbildung gegenüberstellen:[79] Auf der einen Seite Valentinian selbst, der die Härten des Lebens am eigenen Leib erfahren hat, auf der anderen Gratian, der behütet heranwächst, eine intellektuelle Bildung genießt, dann aber auch an die ganzen Härten des militärischen Lebens gewöhnt werden wird. Es ist eindeutig, welcher Weg dem

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[74] 27.6.1–3; zum historischen Hintergrund etwa Raimondi, *Valentiniano I*, 160–169, die (mit dem deutschen Wort) vom ‚Leistungsprinzip' spricht.

[75] 27.6.6–9.

[76] 27.6.8: *non rigido cultu ab incunabulis ipsis ut nos educatum nec tolerantia rerum coalitum asperarum nec capacem adhuc Martii pulveris, ut videtis*.

[77] 26.6.12 f.; 27.10.10 zeigt, wie Gratian langsam an den Krieg gewöhnt wird.

[78] 27.7.15; vgl. das Lob auf Valentinian II. bei Soz. *HE* 7.22.3 mit Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.*, 121. Einen Reflex der Bedeutung der Lebenserfahrung für die Selbstdarstellung der valentinianischen Dynastie könnte in Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.26; *epit.* 47.5 liegen oder in Aus. *Grat. Act.* 14 (wo die Tugend indes in einen christlichen Kontext eingebettet wird).

[79] Der Ausrufung Valentinians II. nach dem Tode seines Vaters ohne Zustimmung des rechtmäßigen Kaisers Gratian widmet Ammian keine große Aufmerksamkeit, allerdings betont er, daß sie *legitime* erfolgt sei (30.10.4–6).

Geschichtsschreiber mehr zusagt: Gratian ist der hoffnungsvolle Herrscher, bei seiner Erhebung wird die Freude der Soldaten vernehmlich; Valentinian hingegen ist eine zweifelhafte Gestalt, die ihre schlechten Eigenschaften immer deutlicher erkennen läßt und bei deren Erhebung die Stimmung verhalten ist.

Die Haltung Ammians zu jenem valentinianischen Ideologem kommt noch einmal nuanciert in den Nachrufen zum Ausdruck: Es ist nicht ohne ironische Note, wenn er hervorhebt, daß Valentinian seinen Aufstieg nicht unwesentlich den Verdiensten seines Vaters verdanke, obwohl er sonst die Väter in Nachrufen nicht erwähnt,[80] auch wenn Ammian die persönliche Kampferfahrung Valentinians durchaus anerkennt.[81] Ausdrücklich sagt er über Valens, daß er Strapazen nicht zu ertragen vermocht habe. Er charakterisiert ihn als *duritiam … magis affectans immanem*, daß er seine ungeheure Abhärtung eher vorgetäuscht habe.[82] Die valentinianische Vorstellung, daß Lebenserfahrung eine Kaisertugend sei, hat Ammian nicht überzeugt, er ließ seine Leser darüber lächeln.

## III. *Schluß*

Die Bücher 26–31 des Geschichtswerks Ammians sind in Kenntnis der Selbstdarstellung der valentinianischen Dynastie geschrieben und setzen beim Leser voraus, daß er Anspielungen darauf zu dekodieren weiß, denn erst dann erschließt sich ihm der volle Bedeutungsgehalt bestimmter Passagen. Dies jedenfalls hoffe ich deutlich gemacht zu haben, wobei, um dies noch einmal zu betonen, der Vergleich mit Themistios nicht etwa dazu dienen sollte, nachzuweisen, daß Ammian Themistios gelesen habe, sondern daß er lediglich Themistios als den Vertreter eines Diskurses, der weit verbreitet gewesen ist, herausgreift, da er in einem so großen Umfang erhalten ist. Es wäre gewiß reduktionistisch zu behaupten, daß Ammians Geschichtsbücher als ganze eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Selbstdarstellung der valentinianischen Dynastie gewesen wären. Doch bildet sie ohne Zweifel eine wichtige Referenz. Die Auseinandersetzung damit ist gewissermaßen das Salz in der Suppe, deren Hauptbestandteile woanders herkommen.

[80] 30.7.4.
[81] 30.9.4.
[82] 31.14.5

# AMMIANUS ON VALENTINIAN. SOME OBSERVATIONS[1]

Hans Teitler

*Abstract*: In 1992 François Paschoud tried to show that in his *Res Gestae* Ammianus sketched a perfidiously and maliciously distorted portrait of the Pannonian emperor Valentinian I ('Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien'). Against this view it is argued here that Ammianus, though he heartily disliked Valentinian and abundantly criticised him, was sufficiently fair to acknowledge his merits, not only in that part of the *epilogus* which is specially devoted to the emperor's virtues (30.9), but also elsewhere in the narrative.

## I. *François Paschoud, Ammianus, and Valentinian*

According to Ammianus Marcellinus, the emperor Valentinian I "was of a good height and perfectly well built, and all in all presented a splendid figure as an emperor" (*pulchritudo staturae liniamentorumque recta compago maiestatis regiae decus implebat*; 30.9.6).[2] With these words Ammianus ends the *elogium* of Valentinian in book 30 of his *Res Gestae*. The concluding clause of Valentinian's obituary mentions a feature which Valentinian had in common with the emperor Julian (*liniamentorum…recta compago*; cf. 25.4.22) and which is, to put it mildly, not unflattering for the emperor who ascended the throne in Nicaea on February 25, 364 and died in Brigetio on November 17, 375. It is in any case hard not to regard *maiestatis regiae decus implebat* as complimentary.[3]

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[1] Thanks are due to Ines van de Wetering, who corrected my English.

[2] Translations put between double inverted commas are borrowed from Walter Hamilton, *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354–378)* (Harmondsworth 1986). There is one exception, for which see note 16.

[3] Roger C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus. A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels 1975) 37: 'Within Ammianus' *elogia* the illustrations of vices and virtues are of supreme importance. Even some of the physical details…are relevant to the writer's moral purpose when a physiognomical interpretation is placed upon them. Thus both Julian and Valentinian I are described as well proportioned, an important indication of a good ruler'.

François Paschoud, who deals with the physical aspect of Ammianus' portrait of the Pannonian emperor in the opening section of the lively and stimulating paper he gave at the Amsterdam Colloquium on Ammianus in 1991, refers to the words just quoted only in a footnote, and apparently attaches little value to them.[4] Instead, he dwells on the rest of Ammianus' description of Valentinian's appearance: "His frame was strong and muscular, and he had gleaming hair and a high complexion. His eyes were grey, with a stern sidelong glance." (*Corpus eius lacertosum et validum, capilli fulgor colorisque nitor, cum oculis caesiis, semper obliquum intuentis et torvum*; 30.9.6).[5] Paschoud quotes Otto Seeck, who, on account of Ammianus' words, wants us to believe that Valentinian's physiognomy betrayed his 'barbarische Abstammung'.[6] To me Seeck's conclusion seems to be a textbook example of 'hineininterpretieren' on the part of the scholar to whom we owe *inter alia* the still readable *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*.[7] Paschoud, however, does not put the blame for this interpretation on Seeck cum suis, but on Ammianus: 'Ne jetons cependant pas la pierre à Seeck et à A. Nagl: c'est Ammien qui leur a suggéré le Barbare dépeint dans leurs lignes', and: 'Le portrait physique de 30.9.6 est un bon exemple de l'art d'Ammien de choisir des mots qui suggèrent beaucoup plus qu'ils ne disent réellement.'[8]

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[4] François Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 67–84, at 67 n. 4: 'Comme l'a relevé G. Sabbah lors du colloque, Ammien conclut le portrait physique de Valentinien en indiquant qu'il avait la prestance qui sied à la majesté impériale. Je cite Seeck et A. Nagl pour montrer que cette conclusion positive n'a pas empêché certains modernes de ne voir dans le Valentinien d'Ammien qu'un brutal Barbare.'

[5] Seyfarth (Wolfgang Seyfarth, *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, adiuvantibus Liselotte Jacob-Karau et Ilse Ulmann, 2 vols. [Leipzig 1978; repr. 1999]) and Sabbah (Guy Sabbah with notes by Laurent Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome VI, Livres XXIX–XXXI* [Paris 1999]) in their editions read V's *intuentis*. Paschoud prefers Lindenbrog's conjecture *intuentibus*.

[6] Otto Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, 6 vols. (Stuttgart 1920–1923$^{2-4}$) 5.2. Cf. for Valentinian and his brother Valens further Seeck's pp. 7 ('germanischen Blutes') and 11 ('echte Germanen').

[7] Cf. Andreas Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire. The Clash between the Senate and Valentinian I* (Oxford 1952) 9: 'We have no reason of any kind to regard him as a German.' See, however, Bruno Bleckmann, 'Bemerkungen zu den *Annales* des Nicomachus Flavianus', *Historia* 44 (1995) 83–99, at 87–89, who sees parallels, not with Germans, but with Gauls.

[8] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 68 (cf. 67 with n. 4) and 83.

With his comments on Valentinian's outward appearance as described by Ammianus Paschoud sets the tone for the rest of his article. He concedes that Ammianus occasionally has something positive to say about Valentinian (and his brother Valens),[9] but he rarely mentions any of these passages and, when he does, passes them over without due attention, as in the case of *maiestatis regiae decus implebat* in 30.9.6. Ironically, in doing so he is guilty of one of the very devices for which he censures Ammianus, viz. reticence.[10] Paschoud further admits that a carefully drawn up balance sheet of what our historian says about Valentinian creates the impression that the emperor ought to be ranked with the good rather than the bad emperors,[11] but he nevertheless argues that it was Ammianus' deliberate intention to blacken Valentinian,[12] and that, in order to achieve his aim, Ammianus used reticence and insinuation in artful imitation of Tacitus.[13] The result, according to the Swiss scholar, is a perfidiously and maliciously distorted portrait of the Pannonian emperor.[14] The principal reason for all this was a literary one: Ammianus wanted to stress the contrast between his hero Julian and the Apostate's successors.[15]

It seems to me that Paschoud is somewhat unfair to Ammianus. Admittedly, there can be no doubt that Ammianus admired Julian more than any other emperor mentioned in the *Res Gestae*. The sheer length of the narrative devoted to him testifies to this, as do, for instance, Ammianus' words in 16.1.3: "Whatever I shall tell about Julian [then still a Caesar]…will almost belong to the domain of the panegyric" (*quidquid…narrabitur…ad laudativam paene materiam pertinebit*).[16] There can

[9] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 68–69: 'Ammien ne brosse évidemment pas de portraits sans nuances. Julien est parfois critiqué, Constance II, Valentinien et Valens se voient à l'occasion concéder quelques circonstances atténuantes…'.

[10] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 67: 'Cette étude veut…montrer les nombreuses réticences, ambiguïtés et insinuations calculées d'Ammien concernant Valentinien.' Cf. 70, 73–74, 78, 83.

[11] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 69: 'Si l'on fait avec soin le bilan critique de ce qu'il dit de Valentinien Ier, on en retire l'impression d'un prince à qui conviendrait le jugement formulé sur Carin par l'Histoire Auguste [*Car.* 3.8]: *medium, ut ita dixerim, uirum et inter bonos magis quam inter malos principes collocandum*.'

[12] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 69, 71, 73, 75, 77 ('perfidies implicites contre Valentinien'), 82–83.

[13] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 84, cf. 67.

[14] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 72–74, 77, 80, 83–84. The title of his article is of course programmatic.

[15] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 83.

[16] I quote here the rendering of John C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, with an English

be no doubt either that Ammianus did not like Valentinian, if only because this emperor and his brother Valens 'disparaged the noteworthy merits of Julian, although they were not his equals or anywhere near it' (*divo Iuliano…cuius memorandis virtutibus eius ambo fratres principes obtrectabant nec similes eius nec suppares*; 26.10.8, cf. 26.4.4). I also admit the correctness of the view that other emperors (Constantius, Valentinian, Valens) served as 'faire-valoir' of Julian.[17] However, Paschoud's thesis about Ammianus' *malignitas*, is, I think, arguable. I do not contest Ammianus' gift for Tacitean innuendo, but to assume that the fourth-century historian sometimes makes indirect suggestions is one thing, to accuse him of perfidy and maliciousness in doing so is another. Nor do I reject out of hand all the evidence Paschoud adduces to prove his case, but some of his arguments are perhaps less cogent than he thinks, while, more importantly, in stressing the negative, and omitting or neglecting the positive characteristics which Ammianus ascribes to Valentinian, he sketches a rather incomplete picture of Ammianus' Valentinian. In this paper I intend to show that Ammianus, though he heartily disliked Valentinian and abundantly criticised him, was sufficiently fair to acknowledge his merits, not only in that part of the *epilogus* which is specially devoted to the emperor's virtues (30.9), but also elsewhere in the narrative. In what follows I shall concentrate on the first chapters of book 26 and on the epilogue in book 30.

## II. *Ammianus on Valentinian's election*

Let us start with Valentinian's first appearance in book 26. After a brief preface and a few words on the transfer of the remains of the deceased emperor Jovian to Constantinople, Ammianus opens book 26 with the election of Valentinian as successor to Jovian (26.1.3–5). At the time the Pannonian officer, who had been mentioned before, though not in a very glorious role (16.11.6–7, 25.10.6–9, cf. 15.5.36 and 30.7.5),[18] was

translation, 3 vols. (London/Cambridge Mass. 1935–1939; repr. 1971–1972). As Jan den Boeft pointed out to me, Hamilton's "will not fall far short of panegyric" is inadequate.

[17] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 68, quoting Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris 1978) 445. Cf. ibidem, 499–501.

[18] For the early career of Valentinian see most recently Noel Lenski, 'Were Valentinian, Valens and Jovian Confessors before Julian the Apostate?', *ZAC* 6 (2002) 253–276.

commanding the second *schola Scutariorum* and was staying in Ancyra (26.1.5). The main body of the army had already moved to Nicaea, and it was there that the principal civil and military leaders were looking for 'a ruler who was of proven ability and possessed dignity' (*moderatorem quaeritabant diu exploratum et gravem*; 26.1.3). The names of two men were suggested (26.1.4), but neither Equitius, tribune of the first *schola Scutariorum*, nor Ianuarius, a relative of Jovian and military commander in Illyricum, found sufficient approval. Equitius because 'he was considered to be rude and rather boorish' (*ut asper et subagrestis*), Ianuarius on the grounds that 'he was too far away' (*quia procul iacebat*; 26.1.5). Then, 'by divine inspiration and unanimously, Valentinian was chosen as a man who was fully up to the requirements and suitable' (*ut aptus ad id, quod quaerebatur, atque conveniens Valentinianus nulla discordante sententia numinis aspiratione caelestis electus est*; 26.1.5). 'It was agreed without contradiction that this was to the advantage of the state' (*nullo renitente hoc e re publica videbatur*), whereupon messengers were sent to Ancyra to urge Valentinian to hasten his coming to Nicaea (*missis, qui eum venire ocius admonerent*; 26.1.5).

Ammianus' account is succinct and stylized. He could no doubt have given further details, as from 26.2.2–4 it appears that he did know more, while we also find additional information in other sources. For instance, in the parallel text of Zosimus it is said that there were many (not just two) other candidates for the throne, among them the *praefectus praetorio* 'Saloustios', i.e. Saturninius Secundus Salutius (3.36.1).[19] Zonaras also mentions 'Saloustios' as a nominee (13.15.1). Philostorgius states that the *patricius* Datianus (who, like Valentinian, was in Ancyra) wrote a letter from Galatia to the court at Nicaea, recommending the election of Valentinian as emperor (8.8). Philostorgius further tells us that others supported Valentinian's election as well, namely Arintheus, Dagalaifus and Saturninius Secundus Salutius, the same man who, according to Zosimus and Zonaras, had been pushed forward as a candidate himself. In view of this a reader may wonder why Ammianus did not find it necessary to spend as many words on the election of Valentinian as he did in 25.5.1–6 on that of Jovian (not one of Ammianus'

[19] 'Saloustios' (*PLRE* I, Secundus 3) was, it would seem, offered the throne twice, i.e. both after Julian's and Jovian's death. See on this François Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle* 2.1 (*Livre III*) (Paris 1979) n. 105 and J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV* (Leiden 2005) ad 25.5.3.

favourite emperors, by the way). On the other hand, only in Ammianus' account do we find the names of Equitius and Ianuarius.[20]

We may regret that Ammianus does not give us more background information, but that is not the issue at stake. Is there sufficient reason to conclude, with Paschoud, that 'even before Valentinian entered the scene in person, he already was a victim of Ammianus' famous propensity to conceal things'?[21] I don't think so. Admittedly, 'Ammianus does not inform us about the identity or the programme of those who carried Valentinian's candidature to a successful conclusion'.[22] However, he does state that Valentinian was chosen unanimously (*nulla discordante sententia*), which in his view, apparently, made further information unimportant and superfluous. Paschoud holds that 'Ammianus was even wary of defining *aptus atque conveniens* with respect to Valentinian'.[23] Was he? In 26.1.3 Ammianus had said that the civil and military leaders were looking for a *moderatorem…diu exploratum et gravem*. When, in 26.1.5, he says that Valentinian was chosen *ut aptus ad id, quod quaerebatur, atque conveniens*, it is obvious that he means that the newly chosen emperor was deemed to be of proven ability and dignity. It is therefore too suggestive for my taste to write, as does Paschoud, that 'Valentinian's greatest merit—only suggested, not explicitly expressed—seems to be that he was not far from Nicaea, where the election took place'.[24] As to Paschoud's comment on Ammianus' remark that Valentinian was chosen by divine inspiration (*numinis aspiratione caelestis electus est*), this is a

[20] See for these matters in the first place Valerio Neri, 'Ammiano Marcellino e l'elezione di Valentiniano', *RSA* 15 (1985) 153–182 and Milena Raimondi, *Valentiniano I e la scelta dell'Occidente* (Milan 2001) 63–87. Cf. also Christian Olariu, 'Datianus, Valentinian and the Rise of the Pannonian Faction', *Historia* 54 (2005) 351–354.

[21] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 70, quoting Jacques Fontaine, 'Le Julien d'Ammien Marcellin', in: René Braun, Jean Richer (eds.), *L'empereur Julien. De l'histoire à la légende (331–1715)* (Paris 1978) 31–65, at 50: 'On peut ainsi constater que, avant même d'entrer personnellement en scène, Valentinien est déjà victime d'un de ces célèbres "silences du colonel Ammien".'

[22] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 70: 'Ammien ne nous éclaire pas sur l'identité et le programme de ceux qui parviennent à faire triompher leur candidat.'

[23] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 70: 'il se garde même de préciser en quoi Valentinien est *aptus atque conveniens*'.

[24] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 70: 'Son mérite le plus grand—suggéré, non énoncé—semble de ne pas s'être alors trouvé trop loin de Nicée, où se déroule la scène de l'élection.' In contrast to Jovian, who, according to Ammianus, was only *paternis meritis mediocriter commendabilis* (25.5.4), Valentinian was commended also by his own merits: *Cuius* [sc. patris] *meritis Valentinianus ab ineunte adolescentia commendabilis contextu suarum quoque suffragante virtutum* (30.7.4).

nice example of playing something down: 'La mention de l'approbation divine, signe positif, *passe presque inaperçue*' (italics mine, HT).[25]

In his sections on the election of Valentinian in book 26 Ammianus gives brief, matter-of-fact and, at least in my opinion, objective information.[26] The historian does not say that he himself regarded Valentinian as the best possible choice. In 26.1.5 he twice makes it clear that he reports the opinion of others, first by adding *ut* in that part of the sentence in which he gives the reason as to why the electoral college chose Valentinian (*ut aptus ad id, quod quaerebatur, atque conveniens*), the second time by using the impersonal *videbatur* when he says that this choice was to the advantage of the state (*nullo renitente hoc e re publica videbatur*). Neither does he say or suggest anything to the detriment of Valentinian. Unlike Zosimus, who says frankly that Valentinian was only second best (3.36.2), Ammianus refrains from expressing his own view, either directly or, pace Paschoud, indirectly.

## III. *'History is a never-ending discussion'*

When one judges a work of art, there is always a touch of subjectivity. What one critic appreciates as beautiful and elegant is rejected as distasteful and ugly by another. Tastes also change, and they are affected by fashion and trends. The history of Ammianean scholarship readily provides instances to illustrate these general rules. In the past Edward Gibbon censured Ammianus' stylistic flaws and the disorder and perplexity of his narrative,[27] while Eduard Norden criticised the incapability of the *miles quondam et Graecus* to express himself in correct Latin.[28] Nowadays, however, there is a tendency to judge Ammianus' Latin more positively, and to regard it as baroque rather than as bom-

[25] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 70.

[26] For a different view see Hartmut Leppin in this volume.

[27] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. Oliphant Smeaton, 3 vols. (New York n.d.) I, 936 n. 91.

[28] Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa. Vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, II (Stuttgart 1974[7]) 648. See on this topic Jan den Boeft, 'Ammianus graecissans?', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 9–18, and note that Norden was not only negative: 'Wer auch nur, wie ich selbst, ein paar Bücher Ammians gelesen hat, ist von der Frische der Darstellung, von der Kunst des Charakterisierens…, von der derben Natürlichkeit und Originalität…aufs angenehmste berührt' (ibid. 646).

bastic and bizarre.[29] What applies to form, applies also to content. In the eyes of Gibbon Ammianus was 'impartial', and 'an accurate and faithful guide, who has composed the history of his own times without indulging the prejudices and passions which usually affect the mind of a contemporary',[30] but Timothy D. Barnes in his *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) sees the fourth-century historian, in the wording of Guy Sabbah, 'more as a writer of fiction and an anti-Christian polemicist than as a trustworthy historian'.[31]

Barnes is, of course, not the first scholar who casts doubts on the trustworthiness of Ammianus. Rosen, Elliott and Szidat, to name but a few, led the way.[32] Paschoud himself also more than once discussed Ammianus' representation of reality, *inter alia* in his brilliant 'Se non è vero, è ben trovato' (1989), in which he convincingly argues, against N.J.E. Austin, that Ammianus' autobiographical passages do not possess 'une valeur d'authenticité toute particulière', but, rather, that the contrary is true; he also warns against the tendency of certain modern historians to read the ancient historiographical sources *sine grano salis*.[33] Unless I am mistaken, Paschoud's criticism of Ammianus became sharper in the course of time. In 1967, when speaking of the problem of corruption in Late Antiquity, he already denounced the historian's partiality in certain matters, but saw no reason to doubt Ammianus'

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[29] See Jacques Fontaine, 'Le style d'Ammien et l'esthétique théodosienne', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 27–37 and cf. Guy Sabbah, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', in: Gabriele Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity. Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* (Leiden 2003) 43–84, at 43–44.

[30] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* I, 562 n. 5, 599 n. 8, 754 n. 83 and especially 947. For a similar view see for instance Alfred von Gutschmid, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', in: Idem, *Kleine Schriften* 5 (Leipzig 1894) 567–584, at 574.

[31] Sabbah, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', 45.

[32] Klaus Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Bonn 1970); Thomas G. Elliott, *Ammianus Marcellinus and fourth-century History* (Sarasota/Toronto 1983); Joachim Szidat, 'Ammian und die historische Realität', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 107–116. Cf. for the issue e.g. Gualtiero Calboli, 'La credibilità di Ammiano Marcellino e la sua arte espositiva', *BSL* 4 (1974) 67–103 and Klaus Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt 1982) 131–163.

[33] François Paschoud, '"Se non è vero, è ben trovato": tradition littéraire et vérité historique chez Ammien Marcellin', *Chiron* 19 (1989) 37–54, at 39; Norman J.E. Austin, 'Autobiography and History: Some Later Roman Historians and their Veracity', in: Brian Croke, Alanna M. Emmett (eds.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney/Oxford/New York 1983) 54–65.

famous statement in the *sphragis*, viz. that he had written a work whose aim was the truth, a truth which he had never consciously set out to pervert by silence or a lie (31.16.9).[34] By contrast, in *Valentinien travesti* Paschoud apparently no longer accepts as sincere this *opus veritatem professum numquam, ut arbitror, sciens silentio ausus corrumpere vel mendacio*, for we are told that a critical reading (of book 28) will reveal several indications of Ammianus' maliciousness and reticence concerning Valentinian.[35]

No one will deny that, in order to understand Ammianus' *Res Gestae* properly or, for that matter, any other literary work of art, a critical reading is necessary. However, a definition of critical reading which is satisfactory to all is hard to give. Accordingly, the results of reading critically will vary. What one reader regards as well-grounded criticism of a naive and positivistic interpretation of Ammianus' work might be seen by another as a hypercritical reading between the lines. Such disagreements are only natural. To be of a different or opposite opinion is part and parcel of the study of literature in general, and of historiography in particular, and this will always be the case. To put it in the words of Pieter Geyl, a leading Dutch historian of the twentieth century, 'history is a never-ending discussion' ('geschiedenis is een discussie zonder eind').[36] Time and again a historical debate starts anew, even on issues which seemingly had been settled once and for all. New issues are raised by new generations of historians, or new answers are given to old questions. 'Für Valentinian gilt wie für Julian, daß sein Bild in der Forschung schwankt', Rosen wrote in 1982, 'doch neigt man heute dazu, ihn insgesamt positiver zu bewerten, als Ammian das getan hat'.[37] Paschoud's contribution to the debate on Ammianus' portrayal of Valentinian is in line with the trend of recent years, with the proviso

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[34] François Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna. Études sur le patriotisme romain dans l'occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions* (Rome 1967) 51: 'On ne peut évidemment pas nier la partialité de l'historien sur ces différents points; ce que l'on peut nier, c'est qu'il y ait une déformation consciente et voulue de la vérité. Il ne faut pas oublier les mots de la conclusion: *opus ueritatem professum numquam (ut arbitror) sciens silentio ausus corrumpere, vel mendacio*; rien ne nous permet de les mettre en doute.'

[35] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 78: '…une lecture critique y décèle plus d'un indice de malveillance et de réticence concernant Valentinien.'

[36] Pieter Geyl, *Napoleon. Voor en tegen* (Zeist 1965$^3$) 5. The book, first published in 1946, appeared in English under the title *Napoleon: For and Against* (London 1949; repr. New Haven/London 1963). Cf. e.g. Herbert H. Rowen, 'The Historical Work of Pieter Geyl', *The Journal of Modern History* 37 (1965) 35–55.

[37] Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 132.

that his position is rather extreme. According to him Ammianus blackens Valentinian even with positive or neutral remarks, as the following examples may show.

## IV. *A case of perfidious prolepsis?*

After Valentinian had arrived in Nicaea in answer to the summons of those who had elected him, he at first would not appear in public. Disturbed by presentiments or repeated dreams, he wanted to avoid the intercalary day of February which was imminent and which, as he had heard, had sometimes been unlucky for the Roman state (26.1.7)—for Ammianus this was a welcome excuse to insert a short digression on the leap year (26.1.8–14), which he rather solemnly concludes by stating that eternal Rome, 'with the aid of the divine power' (*adiumento numinis divini*), approved the reason for introducing such years. Accordingly, 'the day passed which some think unfavourable for beginning great enterprises' (*Elapso die parum apto ad inchoandas rerum magnitudines, ut quidam existimant*; 26.2.1) and it was only on the next day that Valentinian was acclaimed emperor (26.2.2). In the intervening night precautions had been taken, at the suggestion of the prefect Salutius, to prevent possible rivals of the emperor elect to spring into action (26.2.1–2).

In these sections of book 26, according to A. Nagl, Valentinian is depicted as superstitious, and the words *ut quidam existimant* in 26.2.1 indicate, according to P.-M. Camus, that Ammianus himself was of a different opinion from those *quidam*, and found the delay a waste of time. Paschoud refers to these views, but rejects them.[38] However, as in the case of Seeck mentioned above, not the modern scholars are the main culprits, Ammianus is.[39] Although Paschoud concedes that Ammianus apparently remained neutral with regard to Valentinian's decision to delay his accession, and acknowledges that the historian

[38] Assunta Nagl, 'Valentinianus I', *RE* 7A (1948) 2158–2204, at 2161; Pierre-Marie Camus, *Ammien Marcellin. Témoin des courants culturels et religieux à la fin du IVe siècle* (Paris 1967) 170; Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 70–71.

[39] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 71: 'Des jugements comme ceux d'A. Nagl, ou de P.-M. Camus…sont instructifs: Ammien crée effectivement l'impression, dans cette première apparition de Valentinien après son élection, que le nouvel empereur prend de gros risques faisant fi de l'impatience des soldats, laissant un vide favorable à l'apparition d'un rival—parce qu'il obéit à une crainte ridicule sur le caractère néfaste du jour intercalaire.'

did not explicitly reproach Valentinian for anything,[40] he is convinced that 'nous sommes ici en présence d'un artifice savamment calculé par Ammien, qui cherche à dévaloriser Valentinien aux yeux de son lecteur sans cependant rien dire de négatif sur lui et en indiquant même par de discrets indices que sa prudence était somme toute justifiée'.[41] An interesting thought, but extremely difficult either to verify or to falsify.

When Valentinian was proclaimed ruler of the empire and hailed as Augustus, he prepared to deliver a speech (26.2.2–3). However, before he could begin, a deep murmur arose amongst the assembled soldiers, who persistently urged, that a second emperor should at once be nominated (26.2.3)—the army had learnt from recent experience, as Ammianus explains (26.2.4), alluding to the sudden death of both Julian and Jovian. It looked as if the protests of the uproarious soldiers would end in a violent outbreak (ibid.), but at that moment Valentinian took the matter in hand: he upbraided some of the soldiers as stubborn mutineers, and delivered the speech he had prepared (26.2.5). "By this speech [26.2.6–10; Valentinian *inter alia* promised a careful search for a suitable colleague], which gained force from its unexpected firmness, the emperor won over his whole audience. Even those who shortly before had most clamorously demanded another course adopted his advice and escorted him to the palace, surrounded by eagles and standards and a splendid retinue of various ranks. He was already an object of fear (*iamque terribilem*)" (26.2.11).

The expression *iamque terribilem* causes dissension. The adjective occurs some twenty times in the *Res Gestae*. Three times it qualifies an emperor: Valentinian in the passage under discussion, Julian in 15.8.16 and 25.4.8. In book 15 Julian's eyes are described as *cum venustate terribiles*, in the chapter of book 25 devoted to his virtues Julian is said to be *sine crudelitate terribilis*. In both these passages *terribilis* is evidently used *in bonam partem* and is best translated as 'awe-inspiring'. Is this also the case in the present text? Paschoud does not exclude the possibility. The context of 26.2.11, he concedes, may suggest that by his vigorous speech the new emperor instilled awe into the army and earned the support of those responsible for the turmoil. But the Swiss scholar prefers a different interpretation. 'Mais si l'on envisage l'oeuvre d'Ammien dans

[40] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 71: 'Sur l'opportunité du délai qu'impose Valentinien à son élévation, il reste apparemment neutre', and: 'En réalité, il ne formule expressément aucun reproche contre Valentinien Ier.'

[41] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 71.

sa globalité, on ne peut s'empêcher de se demander si l'historien par l'effet d'une *perfide prolepse* (italics mine, HT), ne suggère pas que le prince, qu'il caractérisera deux fois (27.7 et 29.3) comme un monstre de cruauté qui ne parvint que peu de temps à cacher son naturel, était d'entrée de jeu, et en puissance du moins, *cum crudelitate terribilis*.'[42] To substantiate his argument Paschoud points to 28.1.45, about the former *grammaticus* and later *vicarius urbis Romae* Simplicius, a passage in which *terribilis* is used *in malam partem*: Simplicius was *terribilis* by his 'sidelong glances' (*obliquo aspectu*). Paschoud sees a connection with 30.9.6 (already quoted), where Ammianus says that Valentinian had a 'stern sidelong glance' (*semper obliquum intuentis et torvum*): 'son regard torve …l'apparentait au redoutable Simplicius'.[43]

It is not easy to determine whether the immediate context of the words under discussion, or a possible connection with descriptions of Valentinian later in the *Res Gestae* should carry more weight. Paschoud's explanation is ingenious indeed and cannot be dismissed entirely. However, trying to read the *Res Gestae* with an open mind and not a priori taking Ammianus' perfidy for granted, I prefer to take the words *iamque terribilem* in 26.2.11 not as an early warning sign of Valentinian's cruelty, but as a positive conclusion of a chapter which contains a rather favourable description of Valentinian's first appearance in public. Of cruelty there is as yet not a trace, and to take *terribilis in bonam partem*, as in 15.8.16 and 25.4.8, gives excellent sense. The new emperor had done extremely well.[44] He had shown confidence (*vi principis fiducia pleni*; 26.2.5) and courage (*ausus increpare quosdam*; ibidem). His authoritative speech (*oratione, quam auctoritas erexerat inopina*; 26.2.11) was not interrupted by anyone (*nullis interpellantibus*; 26.2.5) and had won over its audience (*flexit imperator in suam sententiam universos*; 26.2.11). In short, he had shown himself, even at this early stage in his imperial career, quite capable of doing things 'with the authority of an established ruler' (cf. 30.7.7 *Utque multa praetereamus, quae egit moderatoris auctoritate fundati*). Even those soldiers who at first were unruly now followed Valentinian's advice. Full of awe they escorted the new emperor with due honour to

[42] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 72–73.

[43] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 73.

[44] Cf. Robin Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Seven Studies in His Language and Thought* (Columbia 1986) 135–136, who compares 'Julian's lamentable failure to control his men' [in book 20] with 'Valentinian's vastly superior handling of a similar situation' [in 26.2].

his palace (*consiliique eius viam secuti, qui paulo ante flagrantissimis vocibus aliud postulabant, circumsaeptum aquilis et vexillis agminibusque diversorum ordinum ambitiose stipatum iamque terribilem duxerunt in regiam*; 26.2.11).[45]

## V. *Narrative and* epilogus

A rehabilitation of Valentinian is not the purpose of this article. Neither do I want to contest that the overall image of Valentinian's reign in the narrative of the later books of the *Res Gestae* is painted in dark and sombre colours. However, it would, in my opinion, be incorrect to deny that Valentinian made a rather good start as emperor, and it would be equally incorrect to assert that Ammianus, in the first two chapters of book 26, does not give him his due. In the remaining part of the *Res Gestae* Ammianus undoubtedly dwells primarily on the negative sides of Valentinian's reign,[46] often quite explicitly (cf. 27.9.3 *et quoniam adest liber locus dicendi, quae sentimus, aperte loquemur*). He criticises the emperor's rashness in the military sphere (27.10.1–11). He reproaches him for his arrogance and unfounded self-esteem (cf. *ut erat sui arrogans aestimator* in 27.10.10, *caute, ut rebatur ipse* in 27.10.1 and the highly sarcastic *ut dux cunctator et tutus* in 27.10.10).[47] He censures the fact that Valentinian "was the first emperor to foster the arrogance of the military to the detriment of the state by advancing them notably in standing and wealth" (27.9.4). He blames Valentinian for "punishing the offences of common soldiers with inflexible severity while treating their superiors leniently" (ibidem). He opens book 28 with a long and gloomy chapter on trials for magic and adultery in Rome, which is characterised by

[45] In the original version of this paper I had written: 'That Valentinian had handled the situation well in Ammianus' eyes can also be deduced from the expression *elata prospere dextra* in 26.2.5, used when Ammianus describes how Valentinian reproached the uproarious soldiers before beginning his speech. In her Budé-edition Marie-Anne Marié renders the words quite fittingly: "Valentinien leva la main droite d'un geste de bon augure"'. However, as Jan den Boeft pointed out to me, the reading *prospere* is, pace Marie-Anne Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome V, Livres XXVI–XXVIII* (Paris 1984) 209 n. 27, untenable and should be altered into *propere* (so e.g. Bentley, Clark and Seyfarth).

[46] Cf. Sabbah, *La méthode*, 495–501.

[47] Cf. Dirk A. Pauw, *Karaktertekening by Ammianus Marcellinus* (Oegstgeest 1972; Diss. Leiden) 140–141; Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 77; Robin Seager, '*Ut dux cunctator et tutus*: the Caution of Valentinian (Ammianus 27.10)', in: *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 9 (1996) 191–196. Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas*, 6 wrongly sees *ut dux cunctator et tutus* as an instance of 'very high praise'.

John Matthews as 'central to the impression conveyed by Ammianus of the reign of this emperor'.[48] Above all, he denounces Valentinian's savage cruelty and disproportionate ferocity (27.7.4–8, 29.3.1–9)[49]—but even so the historian shows that there were some bright spots in the darkness.

In 29.3.9, for example, on the verge of telling the famous story of Valentinian's pet bears *Mica aurea* and *Innocentia*, Ammianus makes no secret of his disgust for the emperor's cruelty, but also says that 'in other respects Valentinian was not that bad' (*alia commodissimi*).[50] In 29.4.1, after the digression in which, apart from the story of the pet bears, other instances of Valentinian's cruelty and brutality are reported, Ammianus returns to his narrative in the following way: "These are indubitable indications of Valentinian's character and blood-thirsty disposition. But even his harshest critic cannot find fault with his unfailing shrewdness in matters of state (*sollertiae…circa rem publicam*), especially if he bears in mind that it was a greater service to keep the barbarians in check by frontier barriers than to defeat them in battle." Ammianus had called the plans to fortify the entire left bank of the Rhine *magna…et utilia* in 28.2.1.[51]

For the background of Valentinian's fortification strategy we have to turn to 26.4.5–6, where Ammianus gives a survey of the barbarian invasions during the joint reign of the Pannonian emperors, and *inter alia* mentions the invasion and devastation of Gaul and Raetia by Alamanni. The immediate cause of this invasion (the Alamanni felt

[48] John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 209–217 thoughtfully discusses this chapter. The citation is taken from p. 209. Cf. further Marie-Anne Marié, 'Deux sanglants épisodes de l'accession au pouvoir d'une nouvelle classe politique: les grands procès de Rome et d'Antioche chez Ammien Marcellin. *Res Gestae* XXVIII, 1; XXIX, 1 et 2', in: Louis Holtz, Jean-Claude Fredouille (eds.), *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes*. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire par ses élèves, amis et collègues I (Paris 1992) 349–360.

[49] This is Paschoud's comment on 27.7: 'Si l'on fait le bilan de ce passage, on constate qu'il contient des éléments peu pertinents, des remarques générales et seulement quelques cas précis, mais surtout que la part du non-dit y est une fois de plus considérable, Ammien privant systématiquement son lecteur de toutes les informations qui lui permettraient de juger par lui-même du bien-fondé des accusations qu'il formule. La cruauté de Valentinien est affirmée, non prouvée' ('Valentinien travesti', 78).

[50] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 79–80 discusses the story of *Mica aurea* and *Innocentia*, which he regards as an invention.

[51] 28.2.1 is not mentioned by Paschoud, for 29.3.9 and 29.4.1 he credits Ammianus' source ('Valentinien travesti', 82). More on this below.

insulted, because they had been given smaller and cheaper presents than they had come to expect) and the ensuing campaigns ending in Roman victories are related in 26.5.7, 5.9–14 and 27.1.1–2.11. In the first part of the *epilogus* in book 30 Ammianus returns to these events. There the historian's tendency to make Julian a point of reference comes to the fore again. He says that the Alamanni had only ventured to invade Gaul after they had heard of the death of that emperor, 'the only man since Constans of whom they were afraid' (30.7.5, cf. 27.1.1). But Ammianus sings the praises of Valentinian as well: "Valentinian, however, also made himself deservedly dreaded (*ideo autem etiam Valentinianus merito timebatur*). He strongly reinforced the army, and fortified the high ground on both banks of the Rhine with strongpoints and castles, so that no assault on our territory could be launched unobserved" (30.7.6).

These words are taken from Valentinian's *elogium*, which, remarkably, consists of three parts. While the *elogia* of Constantius, Julian and Valens all fall into two parts, that of Valentinian is more complex. The catalogue of his vices (30.8) and virtues (30.9) is preceded by a preamble which relates quite a few details about his parentage, and enumerates the military achievements of his reign (30.7). The tone is positive, and the preamble apparently serves as an extension of the list of virtues in chapter 9.[52] On the whole Valentinian is portrayed more positively in the epilogue than in the foregoing narrative.[53] How to explain this discrepancy? Paschoud, arguing against Sabbah's thesis of Valentinian's epilogue as a 'correctif de la schématisation' and as an attempt at objectivity,[54] sees two interrelated factors as being decisive for the answer to this question: the *epilogus* should be regarded as belonging to a historiographical subspecies, in between an *epitome* and a biography, and one

[52] Cf. Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, 231 n. 303 ('C'est la première et seul fois dans un portrait récapitulatif qu'Ammien s'attarde sur la carrière du père de l'empereur. Symbole des vertus militaires, celle-ci vient renforcer les aspects positifs de l'image de Valentinien tout en rappelant la rusticité de ses origines') and 233 n. 318 ('Ammien a commencé par décrire les *acta*, c'est à dire les réalisations militaires, de manière apparemment positive'). Axel Brandt, *Moralische Werte in den* Res gestae *des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Göttingen 1999) 41 n. 191 takes 30.7 and 30.9 together: 'Ich ziehe diese Leistungen…in die Darstellung der Vorzüge des Valentinian ein.'

[53] Pauw, *Karaktertekening*, 141: 'Hier vind ons duidelike spore van 'n neiging by Ammianus om in die epiloog oënskynlik 'n veel meer positiewe portret van Valentinianus te skilder as wat geleidelik uit die verhaal groei.'

[54] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 449–453.

should take into consideration Ammianus' treatment of his sources.[55] Pointing to striking similarities between Ammianus' necrology of Valentinian on the one hand and chapter 45 of the *epitome* of ps. Aurelius Victor on the other, in the wake of Jörg Schlumberger,[56] and inferring that these similarities must go back to a common source, to be identified with the *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus, Paschoud draws the following conclusions: 1. 'au moment de rédiger son *epilogus* sur Valentinien, Ammien suit d'assez près une source que certainement il avait déjà sous la main, mais qu'il n'a utilisée que sporadiquement, ne serait-ce que parce qu'elle était sans doute bien moins détaillée que son propre récit. Cette source donnait de Valentinien un portrait moins négatif que celui qu'on déduit du récit d'Ammien'; 2. 'c'est très vraisemblablement d'elle que dérivent des notations positives sporadiques dans le cours du récit qui font contraste avec sa coloration globalement négative'.[57]

## VI. *Character of the* epilogus

I wonder if Paschoud's reasoning in his *Valentinien travesti* is right. When Ammianus speaks negatively of Valentinian, he accepts this at face value as representing the intention of the author. Rightly, I think. But when Ammianus is positive or neutral, or when he is silent, Paschoud either sees Ammianus' *malignitas* at work, or he puts the relevant statements down to Ammianus' source. Here our views diverge.[58] What I find particularly hard to accept is Paschoud's reasoning with regard to the way in which Ammianus uses his sources.[59] Even granted that in

[55] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 80–81: '…je crois que l'épitaphios de Valentinien permet de montrer qu'il faut tenir compte de deux facteurs étroitement liés…, celui du sous-genre historiographique et celui des sources'; 81: 'Les caractéristiques si particulières et si spécifiques de 30.7–9 montrent que ce finale est d'une tout autre tonalité historiographique: réduit en strette, il présente celle d'une *epitome*; développé en symphonie, il aurait été celle d'une biographie.'

[56] Jörg Schlumberger, *Die Epitome de Caesaribus. Untersuchungen zur heidnischen Geschichtsschreibung des 4. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Munich 1974) 214–217, 233–248.

[57] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 81–82.

[58] For convenience's sake I recount here the passages to which I referred: 26.1.3–7, especially *aptus…atque conveniens*, *nulla discordante sententia* and *numinis aspiratione caelestis electus est* (26.1.5), 26.2.1–2, *iamque terribilem* (26.2.11), *magna…et utilia* (28.2.1), *alia commodissimi* (29.3.9), *sollertiae…circa rem publicam* (29.4.1), *merito timebatur* (30.7.6), *Corpus…et torvum* and *maiestatis regiae decus implebat* (30.9.6).

[59] If Ammianus actually used Nicomachus Flavianus' *Annales*—see on this most recently the sceptical remarks of Richard W. Burgess, 'A Common Source for Jerome,

30.8.8 and 30.8.10 (where, in the catalogue of his vices, Valentinian is compared to his predecessors Aurelian and Hadrian) Ammianus adapted a pro-Valentinian source *in malam partem* (in the case of Aurelian this is disputed, though),[60] it can scarcely be denied that Ammianus is on the whole less unsympathetic towards Valentinian in the *epilogus* than in his narrative. I doubt whether Paschoud's suggestions can be of help to explain this discrepancy. Are we to suppose that Ammianus, when writing Valentinian's necrology, had lost his independence and, with the exception of 30.8.8 and 30.8.10, slavishly followed his source? Paschoud himself rejects this.[61] Or that Ammianus had forgotten all of a sudden that his intention was to blacken the emperor? Or that the *epilogus*, as a historiographical subspecies, had hardly any connection with the rest of Ammianus' narrative? In my opinion Paschoud's line of thought leads to these consequences.

The last point seems crucial to me. Although the *elogia* occupy a special place in the *Res Gestae*, they are to be taken as complementary to the main narrative, as Dirk Pauw has argued in his 1972 dissertation.[62] The *elogium* of Valentinian is no exception to this rule. In it Ammianus

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Eutropius, Festus, Ammianus, and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* between 358 and 378, along with Further Thoughts on the Date and Nature of the *Kaisergeschichte*', *CPh* 100 (2005) 166–192, at 168–169—, it was of course not his only source. See Mark Humphries, '*Nec metu nec adulandi foeditate constricta*: the image of Valentinian I from Symmachus to Ammianus', in: Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York 1999) 117–126, at 121 for a possible relationship between the *Res Gestae* and Symmachus' panegyrics of 369–370.

[60] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 82. Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, 235 n. 326: 'Elle [sc. la comparaison avec Aurélien] a, pour le prince pannonien, une signification plutôt flatteuse, vu le caractère très positif de l'image d'Aurélien, y compris dans les *Res gestae*: cf. 31, 5, 17'. Cf. for 30.8.8 further Stéphane Ratti, 'Jérôme et Nicomaque Flavien: sur les sources de la *Chronique* pour les années 357–364', *Historia* 46 (1997) 479–508, at 479–482 and Raimondi, *Valentiniano I*, 193–210.

[61] Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 82: 'Bien sûr, Ammien garde toujours son indépendance.'

[62] Pauw, *Karaktertekening*, 174: 'While Ammianus does indeed use the epilogue to give a brief summary of the good and bad qualities of a character, his aim is undoubtedly not to provide a complete summary of *all* the vices and virtues either explicitly stated or implicitly revealed by the preceding narrative. This, however, does not imply that the narrative provides a complete portrait, for the epilogue is, as a rule, used to complete the portrait previously drawn by adding qualities which the author for certain reasons could or would not reveal in the course of his narrative. Accordingly, whereas neither epilogue nor the narrative provide a complete picture, we have here in reality the two mutually complementary components of the total image of the character as depicted by one and the same author.'

tries to present a more subtle and multifaceted portrait of the Pannonian emperor in order to adjust the image which he sketched in his narrative. On this point I prefer to follow Sabbah rather than Paschoud.[63] But, as Pieter Geyl would have said, the argument no doubt goes on.[64]

[63] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 452: 'Il nous semble donc qu'il faut voir plutôt dans ces épilogues, où s'établit un équilibre tardif entre les vertus et les vices des princes, une solution de compromis à laquelle deux préoccupations difficilement conciliables, celle de faire triompher une thèse et celle de préserver un certain degré d'objectivité, ont conduit Ammien.'

[64] For Geyl see n. 36.

# VALENTINIAN AND THE BISHOPS: AMMIANUS 30.9.5 IN CONTEXT

David Hunt

*Abstract*: This paper tries to provide a context for understanding Ammianus' noted commendation of Valentinian's religious toleration. It surveys the evidence for Valentinian's religious policy in general, and in relation to Christianity; it details his dealings with bishops, concluding that (contrary to the tradition found in the church historians) he shared with Valens the intention not to disturb the homoean doctrinal settlement of 359/60; where he was drawn into episcopal matters, it was in the interests of preserving public order in major cities of the empire. Ammianus' favourable judgement of Valentinian's laissez-faire approach to religion was aimed at appealing to pagan traditionalists in his Roman audience at a time of increasing intransigence from the Christian regime of Theodosius.

The teenage ruler Valentinian II, holding court at Milan in the mid-380s, found it hard to escape the looming presence of his dead father, the first Valentinian: the latter's example was always conveniently to hand for those who would urge the youthful emperor to better courses of action. So it was with the conduct of religion. In voicing the celebrated petition for the restoration of the altar of Victory in the Roman senate-house, the prefect Symmachus in 384 imagined the senior Valentinian 'from the starry citadel' casting a reproachful eye down towards his imperial successor at the denial of religious practices which he himself as emperor had openly preserved; while barely two years later bishop Ambrose, summoned to court to argue the essentials of Christian doctrine with the 'Arian' Auxentius, would similarly confront the young emperor with the example set by his father who, Ambrose was at pains to emphasize, had scrupulously reserved matters of ecclesiastical judgement for bishops, and not the emperor, to resolve.[1] It is remarkable testimony to the posthumous reputation of Valentinian I as a champion of toleration that, within ten years of his death, both pagan traditionalists and a leading Christian bishop should find in him

[1] Ambr. *Ep.* 75 (21).2; cf. ibid. 5: *non est meum iudicare inter episcopos*; Symm. *Rel.* 3.20 (= Ambr. *Ep.* 72a [17a]).

a model of religious freedom and independence to hold up to his son and heir. Not long afterwards, the historian Ammianus Marcellinus was completing (in Rome) his record of events which, for the western Roman empire, ended with the death of Valentinian I in 375 and the elevation of his then four-year-old son to the rank of Augustus. For Ammianus, the last word on the government of the senior Valentinian was also of religious toleration. The list of his 'actions deserving the approval and imitation of right-thinking men' ends famously with the following encomium:

> In the last place, his rule was distinguished for its tolerance in this respect, that he took a neutral position between religious differences, never troubling anyone, nor ordering them to adopt this or that mode of worship. He was not in the habit of bending the necks of his subjects to his own form of worship with threatening edicts, but left the various groups undisturbed just as he found them.[2]

Valentinian's reputation, already signalled from opposing perspectives by Symmachus and Ambrose, had evidently not escaped the contemporary historian. For Ammianus, the policy of religious neutrality being commended in this passage surely transcended the divide between Christianity and the old gods. Although the Christian tradition, by contrast, would soon come to parochialise Valentinian's religious indifference, and confine it specifically to disputes within Christianity (a process which began firmly with Ambrose and became canonical with the ecclesiastical historians of the fifth century),[3] Ammianus' language leaves no doubt that Valentinian was being praised for a religious tolerance which recognized no boundaries.

This paper will return later to the fuller significance and context of Ammianus' judgement. But first, what evidence can be assembled of the religious character of Valentinian's government?[4] Pre-eminently, from the emperor's own lips comes the statement that laws had been issued at the beginning of his rule 'which granted to everyone free-

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[2] 30.9.5: *Postremo hoc moderamine principatus inclaruit, quod inter religionum diversitates medius stetit, nec quemquam inquietavit neque, ut hoc coleretur, imperavit aut illud; nec interdictis minacibus subiectorum cervicem ad id, quod ipse coluit, inclinabat, sed intemeratas reliquit has partes ut repperit.* I have modified the translation of Walter Hamilton (Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth 1986), in particular his misleading translation of *religionum diversitates* as 'opposing faiths'.

[3] See below, p. 82.

[4] For a still useful summary, see A. Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien (325–395)* (Paris 1972$^2$) 210–216; but especially now Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002) Ch. 5 'Religion under the Valentiniani'.

dom to worship what they had conceived in their minds'.[5] Valentinian was alluding to these earlier 'laws', which have not survived, in a pronouncement to the senate of 29 May 371 reaffirming the traditional distinction between harmless divination (*haruspicina*), which was permitted, and suspect magical practices (*maleficium*) which were not. Valentinian's stance exactly recalled the recognition of traditional procedures of divination which the Christian Constantine had accorded in earlier legislation.[6] More recently, Constantius had seemed less willing to acknowledge harmless versions of divination, but in the immediate context of the notorious series of trials in which Valentinian's officials were even then exposing the seamier side of aristocratic life in Rome, it was important to restate the distinction between *haruspicina* and *maleficium*, between what was legal and what was not.[7] Despite the invocation of religious freedom, this legislative demarcation was in reality much less a matter of religion than of the demands of imperial state security, and thus something of perennial concern to emperors of whatever religious persuasion. There was soon to be a striking case in point, when the eastern regime of Valens was faced with a serious instance of such dangerous *maleficium* in the notorious 'séance' involving courtiers and officials dabbling in predictions of the emperor's successor, and where the ensuing trials at Antioch were surely motivated primarily by considerations of imperial protection, not by purely religious hostility to the practices exposed.[8] The intense political suspicion which surrounded dubious secret rites may also be a factor in explaining Valentinian's early legislation prohibiting nocturnal sacrifices. The pagan Zosimus (or rather his source, Eunapius) was naturally disposed to see this as the start of a religious assault on the mystery cults at the centre of Greek life, beginning, as he put it, 'from the hearth'; but the actual language of the surviving eastern copy of the law links the forbidden sacrifices with 'wicked prayers' (*nefarias preces*) and 'magic preparations' (*magicos apparatus*), as though the association was again with potentially harm-

[5] *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.9: *Testes sunt leges a me in exordio imperii mei datae, quibus unicuique, quod animo imbibisset, colendi libera facultas tributa est.*

[6] Ibidem: *Nec haruspicinam reprehendimus, sed nocenter exerceri vetamus*. For the Constantinian laws, see *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.1–3.

[7] John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 214, with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 218–223. For Constantius' inclusion of *haruspicina* in the list of condemned practices, see *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.4, 6.

[8] For reaffirmation of the case that religion was not the issue in the Antioch trials, see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 223–234, contra Franz J. Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens und die heidnische Opposition* (Bonn 1995).

ful secret activity, rather than with false religion as such. In any event the law was soon repealed, thanks, according to Zosimus, to the interceding of the eminent pagan aristocrat Praetextatus, then proconsul of Achaea.[9]

This successful intervention of Praetextatus at Valentinian's court exemplifies the non-doctrinaire response in the face of religious divisions so commended by Ammianus. Praetextatus would, of course, go on to become prefect of Rome in 367/68, and use the opportunities of his office, among other things, to restore pagan temples in the city; while there are inscriptions from his province of Achaea—from the sacred route between Athens and Eleusis and from the cult-site of Delphi—recording honours to Valentinian and Valens in the wake of the concession which Praetextatus had won for the traditional cults.[10] But such peaceful coexistence of a Christian regime, pagan officials and the survival of the old gods is by no means unique to the Pannonian brothers: it was no more than the pragmatic reality of government, in a world of religious pluralism and competing interests, which prevailed under avowedly Christian emperors for most of the fourth century. Not long after Symmachus, spokesman for the senate, was parading before Valentinian II the example of previous rulers (including his father) who had not interfered with the Roman cults, the pagan orator Libanius addressed his defence of the temples to Theodosius. Like Symmachus, Libanius appealed to the official restraint shown by Christian emperors. From Constantine to Theodosius himself, Libanius averred, there had been no formal closure of pagan temples; he acknowledged that the Pannonian brothers had reinstituted the ban on sacrifices which Julian had lifted, but at the same time had permitted offerings of incense to continue at the altars, which was still the position at the time of Libanius' oration.[11] The whole point of Libanius' argument, indeed, was to

[9] Zos. 4.3.2–3, with François Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle* 2.2 (Paris 1979) 336–338, and now Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 217–218; the eastern law is *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.7 (9 September 364). In 353 nocturnal sacrifices had been a matter of political sensitivity between Constantius and adherents of Magnentius at Rome: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.5.

[10] For references, see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 217 n. 35. Praetextatus' pagan restorations: Amm. 27.9.10, with *ILS* 4003.

[11] Lib. *Or.* 30.7. The dating of the speech to 386 had been established since P. Petit, 'Sur la date du "Pro Templis" de Libanius', *Byzantion* 31 (1951) 285–309, but a case for 390 is made by H.-U. Wiemer, 'Die Rangstellung des Sophisten Libanios unter den Kaisern Julian, Valens und Theodosius. Mit einem Anhang über Abfassung und Verbreitung von Libanios' Rede Für die Tempel (Or. 30)', *Chiron* 25 (1995) 89–130, at 123–129.

contrast the enlightened pragmatism of the emperors with the fanatical and destructive outbursts of Christian monks and laymen who were laying waste pagan shrines in the Syrian countryside.

Valentinian's acclaimed religious tolerance was, then, perhaps no more than might be expected from a (new) imperial regime seeking to navigate successfully through the entrenched interests of its subjects: it continued the *modus vivendi* with the old gods which Christian emperors since Constantine had in practice found themselves obliged to sustain.[12] The process had been accompanied, and in large measure obscured, by the increasingly hostile rhetoric of official pronouncements denouncing the ills of paganism, a rhetoric from which Valentinian was certainly not immune. It has not escaped notice that the earliest appearance of the term *pagani* in the legal texts as a blanket label of Christian abuse for the adherents of the old gods occurs in a law of his addressed to the proconsul of Africa in 370, which denounces the actions and decrees of the time of Julian 'when any corruptions roused the minds of the *pagani* against the most holy law'.[13] Whatever political accommodations were required with the old gods, Valentinian's official language was open and uncompromising when it came to advertising the Christian character of his regime.

He was, in all probability, the first Roman emperor to have come to power already baptized into the faith (save, ironically, for the apostate Julian, who had in an earlier life entered the junior ranks of the clergy): the fact that Valentinian had ruled as a baptized Christian was used by Ambrose to reinforce the authority of his example for his yet unbaptized son.[14] Valentinian may also have gone further than his Constantinian predecessors in publicly identifying his regime with the celebration of major Christian festivals, given Neil McLynn's acute observation that the date (28 March) on which Valentinian staged the cere-

[12] For a model of 'consensus' rather than conflict governing relations between Christian emperors and paganism, see H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore/London 2000) e.g. 244–250.

[13] *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.18 (17 February 370): *Quam ultimo tempore divi Constanti sententiam fuisse claruerit, valeat, nec ea in adsimulatione aliqua convalescant, quae tunc decreta vel facta sunt, cum paganorum animi contra sanctissimam legem quibusdam sunt depravationibus excitati.* For the term *paganus*, see R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth 1986) 685 n. 11, with TLL X 1.81.

[14] Ambr. *Ep.* 75 (21).5 *baptizatus in Christo*, with Neil B. McLynn, 'The transformation of imperial churchgoing in the fourth century', in: S. Swain, M. Edwards (eds.), *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire* (Oxford 2004) 235–270, at 251.

monial elevation of his younger brother to the rank of Augustus outside Constantinople in 364 was in fact Palm Sunday: so the inauguration of the new imperial college will have coincided with, even perhaps incorporated, Christian rituals for the beginning of Holy Week and Easter.[15] Easter is known to have figured prominently in Valentinian's calendar. He is the first emperor to have legislated a regular amnesty for minor criminals and captives to mark the Easter festival which, he affirmed, 'we celebrate from the innermost part of our heart (*intimo corde*)'; and it can hardly be a coincidence that it was verses in celebration of Easter which the court poet Ausonius used to hail the 'threefold piety' of Valentinian and his colleagues (Valens and Gratian).[16] To those accustomed to Ammianus' depiction of the savage and unrelenting cruelties of Valentinian's regime (complete with man-eating bears guarding the private quarters of the palace) this emphasis on Christian compassion and the round of worship may come as a surprise. But to other observers his court at Trier could seem a decidedly Christian environment.[17] For Augustine in the *Confessions* Valentinian's Trier had been a place of Christian conversion, as he famously recounted the episode (later narrated to him by his friend Ponticianus) of the two *agentes in rebus* who had abandoned their careers at court for a life of Christian asceticism: taking a stroll together while the emperor was at the games, they had come across a monastic community in the neighbourhood where their lives were reportedly transformed through reading the *Life of Antony*.[18] Similarly the aspiring young Jerome (if indeed he was not actually one of those whose experiences were told to Augustine) took decisive steps to renounce his secular career in the surroundings of the court at Trier: it was there that he was able to study the writings of bishop Hilary of Poitiers, and it may possibly have been there too that he experienced the celebrated dream (*Ciceronianus es, non Christianus*) which (he claims) drove him to reject worldly culture.[19] Against such a

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[15] Ibidem p. 251. For Valens' elevation, Amm. 26.4.3.

[16] Ausonius, *Versus Paschales*, 24–31, with Hagith Sivan, *Ausonius of Bordeaux: Genesis of a Gallic Aristocracy* (London/New York 1993) 109, and esp. Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1994) 82–84. Easter amnesty: *Cod. Theod.* 9.38.3–4.

[17] On Christianity at Trier in this period (in general), see H. Heinen, *Trier und das Trevererland in römischer Zeit* (Trier 1985) 327–347; on Valentinian in particular, for instance, John F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–425* (Oxford 1975) 50–51, and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 80–82 ('highly Christian court').

[18] August. *Conf.* 8.15.

[19] Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis* (Stuttgart 1992) 32–41, on Trier as a

background it is perhaps not surprising to find Valentinian issuing laws from Trier granting tax immunities to Christian virgins and widows, as well as protecting the latter from the 'legacy-hunting' attentions of greedy and unscrupulous clergy at Rome. More was at stake with this last piece of legislation than merely the probity of leading Christians in the capital—there were the competing financial interests of family relatives, for example, to whom the law gave the initiative in bringing prosecutions—, but it remains an important reminder that the moral rigour of Valentinian's regime, well documented in relation to the secular world of the Roman aristocracy, also extended to the standards of behaviour expected from those who had committed themselves to the church.[20]

This law of Valentinian prohibiting clergy from profiting from rich widows is one of the very rare instances of surviving imperial pronouncements in the Theodosian Code addressed to bishops, in this case none other than Damasus, bishop of Rome.[21] Any sign of contact between Christian bishops and the emperor Valentinian is worth noting, for his regime was quick to acquire its trademark reputation for keeping bishops at a distance: however congenial the emperor's own example, and the court environment at Trier, to the promotion of lay piety, the church's clerical establishment (we are led to believe) was made conspicuously unwelcome at Valentinian's door. The court of Constantine and his successors had, of course, increasingly played host to Christian bishops, who kept company with the emperor and were regularly seen in his presence: their visible proximity to the Roman emperor must have been one of the more noticeable signs of the new *tempora Christiana*.[22] Having been temporarily displaced in the imperial entourage by Julian's own idiosyncratic clientele of pagan religious specialists, the

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possible context for Jerome's dream (Hier. *Ep.* 22.30). For Jerome's copying, while at Trier, of two works of Hilary, see Hier. *Ep.* 5.2.

[20] Immunities for virgins and widows: *Cod. Theod.* 13.10.4–6. Legacy-hunting clergy: *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.20 (30 July 370); this law attracted comment from both Jerome (*Ep.* 52.6) and Ambrose (*Ep.* 74 [18].13–14), noting the irony of legacies denied to Christian priests yet not to their pagan counterparts.

[21] E.D. Hunt, 'Christianising the Roman Empire: the evidence of the Code', in: J. Harries, I. Wood (eds.), *The Theodosian Code* (London 1993) 143–158, at 151 n. 34.

[22] See, in general, my remarks in *CAH* XIII (1998) 238–240. On Constantine's cultivation of bishops, see Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, passim, esp. 317 ff., and now Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2005) esp. 260 ff.

bishops lost no time in seizing the opportunities of renewed access to the court when Jovian returned to Antioch after making peace with Persia; nor did the eastern regime of Valens want for the presence of bishops, notably that of Eudoxius of Constantinople, who would both baptize the emperor and accompany him on his Gothic campaigns in the later 360s.[23] Valentinian's court, by contrast, stands out as a 'bishop-free zone'. A celebrated anecdote from Sulpicius Severus' record of the saintly exploits of Martin of Tours is revealing. Soon after Martin became bishop, reports Sulpicius, he had occasion to travel to Trier to press some (unspecified) concerns on the emperor.[24] As one who shared with Valentinian not only an upbringing in the Pannonian military, but also service with Julian's army in Gaul, Martin might have expected a comradely greeting at the imperial palace.[25] On the contrary, Valentinian's disposition was, in Sulpicius' words, 'stern and arrogant' (*inmitem ac superbum*). Having been repeatedly refused entry, the bishop resorted to a discipline of fasting and constant prayer to effect his mission: after a week of this an angel came to his aid, and opened all doors to the emperor; yet it still required the application of a miraculous burst of flames to his throne before the reluctant Valentinian would rise to his feet and welcome the bishop. Needless to say, after this uncomfortable experience Valentinian was the model of accessibility and generosity: he granted all Martin's entreaties 'even before he asked', entertained him with food and conversation, and offered him profuse parting gifts—which the holy man, in the interests of saintly poverty, was careful to refuse.

There is obviously much about this encounter between bishop and emperor which the sober historian will want to treat with a degree of reserve. The hagiographer's stylised confrontation between the man of

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[23] For Valens and Eudoxius, see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 243–244 (Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 366 has the baptism, while Philost. *HE* 9.7 records the bishop's presence with the court at Marcianopolis during the Gothic wars). For various episcopal approaches to Jovian, including Athanasius, see H.C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer* (Tübingen 1988) 164–178; Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. 1993) 159–160; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 237–238.

[24] Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 2.5.5–10.

[25] For a speculative reconstruction which brings Valentinian and Martin together in the same unit of the imperial guard, see David Woods, 'A note concerning the early career of Valentinian I', *AncSoc* 26 (1995) 273–288. This has been countered by Noel Lenski, 'Were Valentinian, Valens and Jovian Confessors before Julian the Apostate?', *ZAC* 6 (2002) 94–117, but the common military background and service in Gaul remains.

God, deploying all the spiritual weapons at his disposal, and the intransigent earthly ruler owes more to the fearless prophets and wayward kings of the Old Testament than it does to fourth-century Trier;[26] and Sulpicius' introduction of Valentinian's 'Arian wife' urging him against the bishop's supplications hints at a familiar motif of orthodox defiance in the face of over-mighty and heretical courtiers.[27] But the scene-painting was nevertheless drawing upon what was to Sulpicius and his readers a familiar and well-established image of the court of Valentinian, that it was an inhospitable and hostile place to be, especially if you were a bishop.

The image was equally capable of generating more favourable readings from those who would see positive gains in an imperial court devoid of the presence of bishops. Thus Ambrose, as we have seen, could attempt to make political capital of Valentinian's exclusion of bishops as a role-model for his son. For Ambrose the immediate issue was the *causa fidei*, the determination of right doctrine—it was not for emperors to make judgements about matters of the faith, and they should distance themselves from those whose province it was, that is the bishops—, but Ambrose also attributed to Valentinian the broader principle that not only in the *causa fidei* but in any other cases where bishops were under accusation they should not be subject to secular judges, *sacerdotes de sacerdotibus voluit iudicare*.[28] Ambrose knew of legislation of Valentinian to this effect (*non solum sermone … sed etiam legibus suis*); and although no such law of his survives in the Theodosian Code, it appears that in the course of the conflict between Damasus and Ursinus for control of the Roman church Valentinian (and Gratian) had issued a ruling that bishops should not have to defend themselves before the ordinary courts, or (as a later Roman council expressed it) before a 'profane' judge.[29] This pronouncement may be what lies behind Ambrose's assertion.

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[26] For the Old Testament dimension to Sulpicius' depiction of Martin's encounters with emperors, cf. J. Fontaine (ed.), *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de Saint Martin*, vol. 3 (Paris 1969) 913–923.

[27] Cf. the theme of the 'Arian' takeover of the court of Constantius II which dominates Sulpicius' characterisation of the ecclesiastical politics of the era of Hilary of Poitiers and his allies: *Chron.* 2.38.1 et passim.

[28] Ambr. *Ep.* 75 (21).2 (quoting from a Valentinianic rescript?): *in causa fidei vel ecclesiastici alicuius ordinis eum iudicare debere qui nec munere impar sit nec iure dissimilis'*; cf. ibid. 5: *non est meum iudicare inter episcopos*.

[29] Ambr. *Epp. extra collectionem* 7.2 (letter from Roman synod in 378 addressed to Gratian/Valentinian II), alluding to an earlier imperial reply granting the Roman bishop

A comparable and much-quoted statement of the principle of leaving church matters to bishops is attributed to Valentinian in the church history of Sozomen.[30] Addressing the bishop of Heraclea on the Propontis, who had sought imperial permission, on behalf of fellow-bishops in the neighbouring regions of Bithynia and the Hellespont, to hold a council to endorse their version of Christian orthodoxy ('for the correction of doctrine'), Valentinian reportedly responded: 'It is not right for me, as one enrolled among the laity, to interfere in such issues; let the priests who are concerned with this assemble by themselves wherever they wish.' Thus left to their own devices by the emperor, the bishops gathered for their council at Lampsacus, on the eastern shore of the Hellespont.

Although the historicity of Valentinian's reply to the bishops is legitimately open to question (the words seem more likely to reflect Sozomen's own construction of the imperial role as one distinct from that of the priest than anything the emperor actually said),[31] none the less it is worth pursuing the historical context of Sozomen's episode. The narrative has reached the spring of 364, as the new imperial pair moved through Thrace *en route* towards the division of their empire at Sirmium later that year (July/August).[32] Since Julian had issued his amnesty for Christian bishops who had fallen foul of Constantius' attempts at enforcing an approved orthodoxy, there had been a flurry of episcopal gatherings in West and East as the reaction against the homoean creed imposed in 359/60 gathered momentum.[33] Councils of anti-homoean bishops of varying persuasions are known to have met in Paris (360?), Rome and elsewhere in the West, and in Alexandria (362), Antioch (363) and across Asia Minor. While this conciliar activity owed much to the rising surge of episcopal independence unleashed after what many

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the right to try offending bishops: *ut et de religione religionis pontifex cum consortibus iudicaret nec ulla fieri videretur iniuria sacerdotio, si sacerdos nulli usquam profani iudicis, quod plerumque contingere poterat, arbitrio facile subiaceret*. A law of Constantius II had earlier exempted accused bishops from appearing in secular courts: *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.12 (23 September 355).

[30] Soz. *HE* 6.7.2.

[31] See Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Grossen zu Theodosius II: das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret* (Göttingen 1996) 195–196, 203.

[32] Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 26–27.

[33] See, for instance, Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 153ff.; Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer*, 107–114.

of the bishops would see as the oppressive meddling of Constantius in their doctrinal deliberations, the fact remained that any change of formally agreed statements of belief, if they were to acquire 'universal' status in the post-Constantinian Christian empire, would require imperial patronage and endorsement. This accounts for the various letters and delegations from councils of bishops which beset Jovian on his return from Persia (including a council which assembled in Antioch at the time he was in residence there), as different groups sought, unsuccessfully, to win him to their cause.[34] With the sudden demise of Jovian after only seven months of rule, the bishops' lobbying had to start again with the new regime; and hence the approach from what was presumably a regional synod in Bithynia and the Hellespont seeking imperial sponsorship to further their particular brand of orthodoxy, the approach which led to Valentinian's reported riposte. In view of the fact that the bishops' envoy arrived while the court entourage was passing through Thrace, and thus *before* the two brothers went their separate ways, the imperial response must actually have been a *joint* pronouncement from what was still then an undivided regime.[35] When the council of Lampsacus had met (Sozomen says the gathering lasted for two months) and come to its decisions, which included the rejection of the creed formally approved at Constantinople in January 360, the bishops still saw the need to report the outcome to the emperor, despite their earlier rebuff; but by now it was Valens alone, on his way back through Thrace to assume control of the eastern empire, with whom they found themselves dealing. Valens' reaction was to stand by the approved creed: he disowned the conclusions of the bishops at Lampsacus, and—in line with what was now established precedent—ordered them back into the exile which Julian's amnesty had temporarily lifted.[36]

It is not my intention here to pursue further the much-maligned ecclesiastical policy of Valens, let alone the inherent tensions between the authority of episcopal councils (and in any case which councils were to be 'normative'?) and the imperial power which bedevilled the church

[34] For Jovian's neutrality in the face of Christian factions (and its misrepresentation by the ecclesiastical historians), see Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer*, 178–181.

[35] Socr. *HE* 4.2.2–3 mistakenly has the bishops seeking permission for the council of Lampsacus from Valens alone after his return to Constantinople, but Sozomen's chronology is to be preferred; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 291 n. 63.

[36] Soz. *HE* 6.7.8–9 (with influential role ascribed to Eudoxius of Constantinople).

of Constantine and subsequent generations.[37] It is important, though, to emphasize that this complex series of events in 364 arose from a common purpose on the part of the Pannonian brothers to uphold the status quo in the face of bishops who desired to undo formulae of belief already established by conciliar process and imperial endorsement (prior to the unsettling advent of Julian). That the emperors were acting in concert in ecclesiastical matters is a fact substantially concealed in the tradition inherited by the fifth-century church historians of the Greek East, who are preoccupied with exposing the ills of Valens' coercive and (to them) heretical regime, to which the western government of Valentinian is at every turn deliberately contrasted.[38] Yet in reality, had it been Valentinian who received the report from Lampsacus, we may conclude that he would have been equally dismissive of its proceedings. When three bishops came westwards the following year as envoys from further anti-homoean synods in various cities of Asia Minor, they entered into communication with Liberius, the bishop of Rome, but failed to make contact with the western emperor.[39] The fact that Valentinian had by then left Italy for the Rhine, as it happened, provided a convenient excuse for their staying away from the imperial court. In truth, they could have expected no more positive response from Valentinian than the bishop of Heraclea had received the previous year. The situation had clearly changed markedly from twenty years earlier when the Roman empire had last been divided between two imperial brothers. Then Athanasius and other episcopal exiles from the East, in flight from the decisions of councils endorsed by the eastern ruler Constantius, could find a sympathetic ear not only from the bishop of Rome but equally at the western court of Constans; and ecclesiastical issues were at the heart of political divisions between the two halves of the empire, almost to the point of civil war in the mid-340's.[40] Not so in 365, when Valentinian assiduously preserved the

[37] Recent re-evaluation of Valens' dealings with the church stems from Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer*, 181–242; cf. brief summary in Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 161–163, and now Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 242–263.

[38] Socr. *HE* 4.1.5, 11–13; Soz. *HE* 6.6.10, 21.7. Thdt. *HE* 4.6.3, 12–13.1 has both rulers sharing the same ('Nicene') beliefs to begin with, but Valens then tempted away by his 'Arian' wife. In practice Valentinian, like Valens, will have grown up amidst the homoean doctrine which prevailed in their Pannonian homeland in the 350's; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 240–242.

[39] Socr. *HE* 4.12.2–4; Soz. *HE* 6.10.3–5.

[40] The evidence is assembled by Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 89–90.

united imperial front with his brother by keeping importunate eastern bishops at bay.[41]

Valentinian's own domain also had its share of bishops manoeuvring to overturn the results of the hectic process of 'creed-making' which had marked the later years of Constantius. Again it was the interruption of Julian, allowing the return of exiled bishops, which was the stimulus for this renewed episcopal activity. Under the influence, principally, of Hilary of Poitiers and Eusebius of Vercellae, both of whom returned from banishment in the east, local synods were summoned across the west in Gaul, Spain and Italy which reaffirmed the Nicene *homoousios* formula and denounced the 'deception' by which Constantius' councils had imposed the homoean creed on an unwilling church; bishops who were loyal to the official creed were declared excommunicated.[42] But without an enforcement of exile by the imperial power, such bishops could well remain in possession of their sees and enjoying the support of their congregations, in disregard of whatever litany of condemnation issued from these conciliar gatherings. The chief case in point was the homoean bishop of Milan, Auxentius, who had been excommunicated by a council of Gallic bishops which assembled in Paris perhaps as early as 360 (and by other western councils), yet was still securely occupying the bishopric of the court city when Valentinian arrived in northern Italy after the division of the empire in 364.[43] The good order of the church in Milan was evidently an issue for the new Christian emperor, the first to settle in the city (Valentinian remained there for the best part of a year) since a council of bishops there in the presence of Constantius in 355 had ousted Auxentius' predecessor Dionysius for refusing to toe the official line. Valentinian, it appears, lost no time in issuing instructions to Auxentius' opponents to keep the peace: as

[41] Cf. also Valentinian's non-involvement with Basil of Caesarea's approaches to the West in the 370's, below, p. 89. Athanasius' successor Peter would flee from Alexandria to bishop Damasus of Rome, not to Valentinian's court (Socr. *HE* 4.22.3; Soz. *HE* 6.19.5).

[42] For the activity of Hilary and Eusebius, see Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.45.5, Rufin. *HE* 10.31–32, and D.H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts* (Oxford 1995) Chs. 2–3. For the 'deception', see the synodical letter of the council of Paris (360?): CSEL 65, p. 45, 9.

[43] On bishop Auxentius (to be distinguished from Ambrose's opponent in 386), see Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 76–83; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 22–31. For his (and other homoeans') excommunication at Paris, see CSEL 65, p. 45, 15; and elsewhere, Athan. *Ep.* 59.1.

we have already seen in relation to Constantius' legacy in the East, there was to be no reversal of the ecclesiastical arrangements which Valentinian found in place.[44]

In a significant test-case, however, for the new regime, Hilary of Poitiers, pursuing his anti-homoean agenda across the Alps from Gaul, endeavoured to engage the emperor in action against the bishop of Milan. Hilary's own description of what transpired at Valentinian's court in Milan provides an instructive glimpse of the encounter between bishop and emperor, and one free of the supernatural pyrotechnics with which Sulpicius Severus embellished the later confrontation with Martin at Trier.[45] Unlike Sulpicius' depiction of Martin, Hilary gives no hint of any difficulty in gaining an audience with the emperor. When he did so, his complaint against Auxentius did not raise issues relating to the latter's public conduct of his office as bishop of Milan (which might conceivably have been of interest to the Roman government), but concerned solely his homoean *beliefs*, which were those of a 'blasphemer, and enemy of Christ', and moreover, Hilary asserted, were at variance with doctrines which the emperor himself 'and everyone else' held to be true. Despite their evidently doctrinal character, Valentinian did not altogether disclaim interest in Hilary's accusations, but deputed them to be heard by two court officials, the *quaestor* and *magister officiorum*, expressly to investigate what was an issue, not of individuals, but of *fides*.[46] However much Valentinian professed to distance the imperial role from ecclesiastical matters, in practice even he could not entirely escape the Constantinian inheritance which had turned the Roman emperor, no less than the bishops themselves, into an arbiter of

[44] The 'grievous edict' which Valentinian issued to the Christians of Milan *sub unitatis specie et voluntate*, mentioned by Hilary, *C. Auxent.* 7 (see next note). For the expulsion of Dionysius, see Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.39.3–6, with McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 13–22.

[45] The episode is known only from Hilary's account of the proceedings in his *Contra Auxentium*: PL 10, 613–615. For discussion, see D.H. Williams, 'The anti-Arian campaigns of Hilary of Poitiers and the *Liber contra Auxentium*', *Church History* 61 (1992) 7–22, and in *Ambrose of Milan*, 78–80; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 25–27; Timothy D. Barnes, 'Valentinian, Auxentius and Ambrose', *Historia* 51 (2002) 227–237, at 227–231.

[46] Ursacius, *magister officiorum*, and Viventius, *quaestor*, both loyal Danubian supporters, were evidently trusted "trouble-shooters": they had only recently been charged with investigating the cause of the mysterious illness which struck both imperial brothers soon after their inauguration (Amm. 26.4.4). Barnes, 'Valentinian, Auxentius and Ambrose', has shown that the 'roughly ten bishops' also mentioned by Hilary as present at the enquiry were there as allies of the two protagonists, and not as judges.

Christian truth; nor could Hilary hope for any successful outcome to his campaign against Auxentius without involving the emperor.[47]

As it turned out, Hilary's hopes were not to be realized. As he declares in his own version of the proceedings, the appointed judges and Valentinian himself were convinced by Auxentius' version of his own views, that they did not represent the Arianism of which he was accused, and that they were in accordance with the official doctrines promulgated under Constantius (as Auxentius was able to demonstrate by forwarding to Valentinian a copy of the *gesta* of the council of Ariminum in 359). The episode concluded with the emperor demonstrating a public show of communion with Auxentius as the established bishop of the court city ('to mark the soundness of his faith'), and Hilary unceremoniously ordered to leave Milan, protesting at his opponent's claims as a mockery of 'God and men'.[48] Hilary's challenge to Auxentius before Valentinian's tribunal thus resulted only in confirmation of the status quo and imperial endorsement of the existing bishop, and the expulsion of Hilary from the court as the troublesome prelate who had threatened to disturb the peace. There is no sign of any further attempt by Hilary to provoke imperial intervention against Auxentius; and although some years later councils of bishops in Gaul and Italy, including a Roman synod *c.* 370 attended by over 90 bishops, were still denouncing the heresy of the bishop of Milan, Valentinian, by now at Trier preoccupied by the demands of the Rhine front, remained unmoved.[49] Although one version of the synodical letter of this Roman council asserted that the bishops had assembled 'on the emperor's instructions' (*ex rescripto imperiali*), this may well represent some degree of special pleading to claim the authority of Valentinian for their cause:

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[47] Despite Constantine's professed deference to the judgement of bishops in matters of the faith, it was to the emperor that, for example, Arius and his friend Euzoius presented their statement of belief in 327, and it was the emperor who pronounced it orthodox: for the documents, see H.-G. Opitz, *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianisches Streites 318–328* (Berlin 1935) nos. 30, 32.

[48] *C. Auxent.* 9. McLynn, 'Imperial churchgoing', 252, has interpreted Hilary's description of Valentinian 'coming to communion' with Auxentius as specifically referring to attendance at the Eucharist, and thus the first indication of the Roman emperor participating in the church's regular public worship.

[49] The Roman synod, which followed upon reports of meetings of 'Gallic and Venetian' bishops condemning the views of Auxentius, is known of from both Latin (PL 13, 347–349; PL 56, 144–145) and Greek (Soz. *HE* 6.23; Thdt. *HE* 2.22) versions of the synodical letter. See, for instance, Ch. Pietri, *Roma Christiana* (Rome 1976) 733–736; Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 80–82.

more likely that these further episcopal attempts to involve the emperor against Auxentius had been met with the same kind of rebuff as had those bishops from the Hellespont: 'go and assemble by yourselves wherever you wish'.[50]

Auxentius remained secure in his tenure of the see of Milan until his death in 374, to be succeeded in the office of bishop by none other than the incumbent *consularis* of the local Roman province of Aemilia and Liguria. The election of a new bishop of Milan would not, in the normal course of events, be a matter for imperial intervention, especially when the emperor had preoccupations elsewhere, and had made so evident a point of distancing himself from ecclesiastical matters; but it is clear that an *imprimatur* sent from Valentinian at Trier in some way contributed to Ambrose's remarkable transition from governor to bishop. The emperor's role was quick to enter the hagiography which comes to dominate our sources—Ambrose's efforts to resist his election overcome by a combination of popular assent and imperial endorsement—so much so that it is difficult to know what in reality may have happened.[51] The fact that the vacancy was clearly the occasion of factional disorder among the Christians of Milan will have engaged the secular authorities, in the first instance Ambrose himself as the local governor. When it emerged that one of the parties to the dissension was promoting him as a candidate for the bishopric (given the prevailing divisions, the notion that Ambrose was the people's universal choice is surely the wishful thinking of the hagiography), it is not hard to imagine that this was referred to Ambrose's superiors in the imperial hierarchy: not least to the long-standing praetorian prefect of Italy and Illyricum, Petronius Probus, who will have been kept informed by his *vicarius* on the spot in Milan (it was he who received the emperor's reply, according to the *Vita Ambrosii*).[52] We may justifiably suspect that it was the emi-

[50] I base my suggestion here on the interpretation of McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 40–42. For *ex rescripto imperiali*, see PL 56, 144.

[51] The principal sources are Rufin. *HE* 11.11; Paul. *V. Ambr.* 6–9; Socr. *HE* 4.30; Soz. *HE* 6.24.1–5; Thdt. *HE* 4.7. Basil (*Ep.* 187.1) makes no mention of the emperor's role in his response to the news of Ambrose's election. Among modern discussions, McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 44–52, is more politically nuanced than Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 112–116; both are reviewed by P.I. Kaufman, 'Diehard Homoians and the Election of Ambrose', *JECS* 5 (1997) 421–440. See further, Barnes, 'Valentinian, Auxentius and Ambrose', 235–236.

[52] Paul. *V. Ambr.* 9: *praeceptum…erat vicario*; rather than a secular *relatio* to the emperor (*V. Ambr.* 8), Socr. *HE* 4.30.6 mistakenly has the approach to Valentinian coming from the bishops assembled to consecrate Ambrose (cf. Thdt. *HE* 4.6.5ff. who fancifully sets

nently Christian Probus, to whom Ambrose owed his career so far, and whose unceasing efforts on behalf of his protégés are famously noted by Ammianus, who engineered the emperor's intervention in support of Ambrose's election; with hindsight (of course) Ambrose's hagiographer would have Probus despatching him to his appointment as governor with the prophetic charge 'go, behave not as judge (*iudex*) but as bishop (*episcopus*)'.[53] Whatever the source of his intervention, we can be reasonably certain that the arguments which persuaded Valentinian were not ecclesiastical in nature. At a time of sharp tensions in the Christian congregation, the prime concern of the emperor and his officials was the public order of the city of Milan, and any imperial backing for the cause of Ambrose must have been on the ground that his election as bishop was seen as the way to restore peace to the streets. It was an outcome which Ambrose himself claimed to have fulfilled when he alluded to the emperor's role in his election in the very same letter to Valentinian II with which this paper began: the congregation of Milan had chosen him as their bishop, Ambrose affirmed, on being assured by the elder Valentinian that his election would bring peace (*quies*).[54]

Valentinian already knew of the potential for public disorder surrounding contentious episcopal elections from the murderous events at Rome which a few years previously (366) had accompanied the disputed succession to bishop Liberius.[55] In contrast to our relative lack of hard information about the nature of his involvement in the election of Ambrose, Valentinian's engagement with the earlier conflict between the rival camps of Damasus and Ursinus for possession of the see of Rome is documented in a surviving series of imperial rulings from 367 onwards addressed to successive prefects and vicars charged with

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the whole episode in the context of an encounter between Valentinian and bishops). For popular unanimity, see *V. Ambr.* 6: *mirabili et incredibili concordia*, or Rufin. *HE* 11.11: *unum populum…atque unam fidem.*

[53] Paul. *V. Ambr.* 8. On the celebrated Probus, see *PLRE* I, 736–740, with Amm. 27.11 (NB 27.11.2: *beneficum…et amicos altius erigentem*); cf. Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 277–278, and Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 117–119.

[54] Ambr. *Ep.* 75 (21) 7: *…pater pietatis tuae quietem futuram spopondit, si electus susciperet sacerdotium.* In reality, it remains obscure just how far Ambrose's election as bishop brought order to the divided Christian congregation of Milan, when in practice he must have had to deal with the existing "Auxentian" hierarchy. For some of the historical problems of the early stages of his episcopate, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 53ff.; Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 116–127.

[55] See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 408–423. The episode was famously known to Ammianus: 27.3.12–13.

keeping order in the city and its surroundings.[56] The emperor became involved as a result of reports on the situation from his senior subordinates in the capital—only in one instance (concerning the repossession of a church still occupied by the Ursinians) is there a hint of Valentinian responding directly to an approach from bishop Damasus[57]—and his pronouncements were directed entirely at supporting his officials in maintaining peace and concord among Rome's Christian congregation, and in the city at large. The emperor revealed his religious interest only to the extent of acknowledging the particular importance of harmony among Christians because of the dignity and honour owed to matters of the church (… *in ecclesiae vel sede vel causa, quarum rerum utraque et modestiam poscit et cultum*), and this, incidentally, in a reply addressed to the doyen of the Roman pagan establishment, the prefect Praetextatus;[58] in general, the conditions under which Ursinus and his supporters have their exile remitted and subsequently reimposed on the emperor's orders are governed exclusively by considerations of unity and good order for Rome and its Christian community.[59] As with the election of Ambrose, *quies* was Valentinian's prime concern for upholding the episcopal regime of Damasus.

In the last months of Valentinian's rule, when an emergency on the Danubian front brought the imperial court to Carnuntum in Pannonia,[60] there are hints of renewed episcopal attempts to engage the western emperor in resolving the church's divisions. It may have been in May 375 that Basil of Caesarea explicitly invited his western counterparts to enlist the aid of 'the ruler of your part of the world' in settling the ecclesiastical troubles of the East; but the chronology is far from certain, and Basil's letter in any case acknowledges that it would be 'difficult' to secure such imperial interest; nor is there the least indication that western bishops actually took up Basil's invitation.[61] Perhaps more

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[56] To be found in the dossier known as the *Collectio Avellana* 5–12 (CSEL 35, 48–54).

[57] *Coll. Avell.* 6.2: *defensorum ecclesiae urbis Romae sive Damasi sacrae legis antistitis petitione perspecta*. Later in Valentinian's reign Damasus seems to have secured from the emperor a ruling which exempted accused bishops from the secular courts, see above n. 29.

[58] *Coll. Avell.* 5.1; three years earlier Praetextatus had successfully won from Valentinian a concession to permit nocturnal sacrifices, see above p. 74.

[59] E.g. *Coll. Avell.* 11.2: *faventes concordiae populi Christiani, quieti etiam urbis sacratissimae providentes*; Ursinus was excluded *non iam ut Christianum…sed ut hominem factiosum perturbatoremque publicae tranquillitatis* (ibid. 12.3).

[60] See Amm. 30.5.1–2.

[61] Basil *Ep.* 243.1. Most have opted for 376, but the case for May 375 is made by W.-D. Hauschild, *Basil von Caesarea, Briefe*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart 1993) 212–213.

telling is the fact that the whole series of diplomatic efforts exerted by the bishop of Caesarea during the decade of the 370's to forge an east-west 'Nicene' alliance is conducted without any other reference to the western emperor:[62] Valentinian's court, it would appear, was still being perceived as unpromising territory for episcopal manoeuvring.

Nor should we attach much credence to a letter of Valentinian seemingly endorsing the Trinitarian consubstantiality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit agreed by a council of bishops which he 'ordered' to take place in Illyricum around this time.[63] This document, preserved only by Theodoret, has usually been dismissed as spurious, and is certainly unlike any other fourth-century imperial correspondence in its plethora of scriptural quotations and allusions; the context in Theodoret also places it in suspicious proximity to a manifestly fictional version of Valentinian's involvement in the election of Ambrose, which has the emperor actually present at the baptism of the new bishop.[64] Theodoret's text is an extreme form of the church historians' penchant for constructing Valentinian as a convinced Nicene (which we have already observed), and can hardly be taken as serious evidence of an actual change of policy on the part of the emperor, or of a new-found imperial activism in ecclesiastical affairs prompted by the advent of Ambrose.[65] It would be rash to conclude that Valentinian suddenly in the summer of 375 found a taste for ecclesiastical issues which he had consistently disowned thus far.

Certain basic principles, I have endeavoured to suggest, governed Valentinian's dealings with bishops. With the exception of the case of Hilary, which, as we have seen, showed that it was not always possible for the emperor to evade the *causa fidei*, ecclesiastical issues and matters of doctrine were for bishops to decide through their own conciliar processes. This was no different from what was officially claimed for the era of Constantine and his successors (although the first Christian emperor had shown less reluctance in reality to immerse himself in episcopal arguments), and Valentinian no less than Valens was pub-

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[62] For Basil's complex web of contacts, see Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1994) 288–317.

[63] Thdt. *HE* 4.7.6ff.

[64] On the dubious nature of this episode in Theodoret, see G. Bardy, 'Sur un synode de l'Illyricum (375)', *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes* 2 (1912) 259–274, and more recently McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 92–94; Williams, *Ambrose of* Milan, 123–126.

[65] As implied by Barnes, 'Valentinian, Auxentius and Ambrose', 233–237.

licly loyal to the doctrinal settlement of 359/60 which Julian's episcopal amnesty had threatened to undermine.[66] But Valentinian did not reimpose penalties of exile on those bishops who had returned to their sees, and the 'regrouping' which would eventually lead to the new Catholic orthodoxy of the Theodosian age was able to take place (in the West) without imperial constraint. Only in the event of a serious issue of public order was the emperor seen to involve himself in the disputes of bishops, and then only when called upon by his own officials in the necessary course of their duties.

That the extent of his public involvement with bishops was determined by the requirements of preserving *quies* in the major cities of his domain is a conclusion not without relevance to Ammianus' judgement of the religious policy of Valentinian. Whether it was popular disturbances in Antioch against Julian's mania for sacrifices, or indeed the bloody confrontation between the adherents of rival bishops in Rome, Ammianus recoiled from the excesses of religiously-inspired conflict, and one aspect of the *moderamen* which the historian commended in the rule of Valentinian may well have been the prominence given to the enforcement of public order.[67] But it was the non-interventionist, and non-coercive, character of his stance on religious matters which particularly stirred Ammianus' praise. Among Christian historians (as mentioned above) this view of Valentinian served pre-eminently to reinforce, by means of contrast, their hostile depiction of the seemingly more assertive ecclesiastical policy of Valens. Ammianus, on the other hand, shows no interest in Valens' Christianity or its impact on his subjects (unless we follow Timothy Barnes in reading the entire account leading up to the Adrianople disaster as an indictment of the Christian empire).[68] For Ammianus' history, I would suggest, the salient contrast with Valentinian's benign toleration of religious difference is not Valens, but Constantius. In the narratives of both Valentinian and Constantius, the obituary material ended, in each case immediately prior to the respective sketches of their physical appearance, with comment on their conduct of religion: in the case of Constantius this had been specifically

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[66] Explicit in *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.18 (cf. above, n. 13).

[67] Pace Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 80 n. 12, I would still defend the conclusions restated in my 'Christianity in Ammianus Marcellinus revisited', in: E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica* 24 (1993) 108–113. For the historian's denunciation of *seditiones*, with reference to the city of Rome, note esp. Amm. 14.6.2 ff.

[68] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 175 ff.

the *Christiana religio*, and the comment had rounded off the list of *vitia*, not *virtutes* as with Valentinian. Constantius' fault had been to foster argument and divisions by encouraging contentious debate, and hence to hamstring the *cursus publicus* with bishops scurrying hither and thither to synods 'while he tried to make the whole Christian church conform to his own will'.[69] I do not intend here to revisit interpretation of this celebrated passage, merely to emphasize that the burden of Ammianus' criticism (true or not) is directed at the perceived enforcement of religious uniformity through the emperor's excessive resort to bishops and councils.[70] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Ammianus' readers were meant to recall this critique of Constantius' ecclesiastical interference when they came to the encomium of Valentinian's religious toleration. Unlike Constantius, Valentinian's dealings with the church had refrained from deploying bishops and their conciliar structures as instruments of imperial coercion.

Nor, according to Ammianus, had Valentinian issued 'threatening edicts'. As has long been recognized, the point here may be less a cross-reference within the history, than an allusion to the contemporary context of its time of composition, given that Ammianus was completing his work in Rome *c.* 390–391.[71] It was Edward Thompson in 1947 who first associated this passage with the anti-pagan legislation of the regime of Theodosius:

> If the words have any meaning at all, they express not only approval of Valentinian's policy, but also regret that it is a thing of the past. No contemporary reader of the words could fail to see the veiled criticism of Theodosius.[72]

The particular law in question is the pronouncement of 24 February 391, issued while Theodosius was still in the west at Milan and

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[69] Amm. 21.16.18: *dum ritum omnem ad suum trahere conatur arbitrium*. For Ammianus' use of 'ritus' in connection with Christianity, see J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXI* (Groningen 1991) 273–274.

[70] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 88–90, criticizes earlier views of mine on this passage; for some balanced discussion of the content of, and potential audience for, Ammianus' remarks on Constantius' religious policy, see V. Neri, 'Ammianus' definition of Christianity as *absoluta et simplex religio*', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 59–65.

[71] On the time of composition, see Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 22–27.

[72] E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 116.

addressed to the Roman prefect Ceionius Rufus Albinus, which prohibited sacrifices and even entry to pagan temples.[73] Far from being 'the icy grip of an intolerant Christianity' (as one recent study has described it)[74] newly taking hold of the Roman world, this legislation needs to be seen in perspective against the continuing background of similar pronouncements banning sacrifice which had been issued since the time of Constantine, especially in connection with suspect rituals of divination; we saw earlier that the Pannonian brothers themselves had prohibited sacrifices in the early months of their rule, and Theodosian legislation had done so already in the 380s.[75] The law of February 391 is not then the sudden plunge into the final death-throes of paganism which has often been presented (e.g. Piganiol's 'une sentence du mort').[76] Moreover, it is directed not at the population at large, but specifically at the public conduct of provincial governors, in this instance those in the southern part of the Italian peninsula (*Italia Suburbicaria*), who fell under the purview of the law's addressee, the prefect of Rome; and the 'novelty' of the law (in so far as the editing processes of the Code permit such a claim) is that it is the first to prescribe a hierarchy of monetary fines for different grades of governor convicted of the offences.[77]

It is the specific context of the reception of this law addressed to the chief magistrate at Rome and his Italian subordinates (more so than its anti-pagan provisions in general) which may have some bearing on our reading of Ammianus and his 'threatening edicts'. In the final stages of producing his history, he seems in this passage to be reflecting the special concerns of that influential section of his Roman audience who

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[73] *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10 (the manuscript mistakenly has Albinus as *praetorian* prefect); four months later, similar instructions were sent to the prefect of Egypt (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.11, 16 June 391). A connection between this legislation and Ammianus' 'threatening edicts' was made by G. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris 1978) 498 n. 134, and *Ammien Marcellin: Histoire*, vol. 6 (Paris 1999) 238 n. 339.

[74] Mark Humphries, 'The image of Valentinian I from Symmachus to Ammianus', in: Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London 1999) 117–126, at 124.

[75] *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.7 (21 December 381); 10.9 (25 May 385). One of the most helpful discussions of fourth-century legislation against sacrifices, distinguishing ideology from practicality, is Scott Bradbury, 'Constantine and the problem of anti-pagan legislation in the fourth century', *CPh* 89 (1994) 120–139.

[76] Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien*, 285.

[77] McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 331–333 rightly spotted the limitation of this law to southern Italy, and that the grades of governor mentioned (*consulares*, *correctores*, and *praesides*) correspond to those of the 'suburbicarian' provinces.

continued to serve the old gods, and whose public careers still revolved around the maintenance of traditional pagan observances. The prefect Albinus belonged to a leading pagan dynasty at Rome, and the Italian governorships remained very much the preserve of the old senatorial élite which, despite being increasingly Christianised, could still raise a voice in defence of their ancient cults: it was only a few years previously that the senate, through the interceding of Albinus' predecessor Symmachus, had appealed to Valentinian II for the restoration of the Altar of Victory.[78] If there was any group for whom the prohibitions and penalties of February 391 could be perceived as especially 'threatening edicts' then it was the Roman pagan establishment in its own heartlands, who were the object of the law, and Ammianus' choice of language to commend Valentinian's policy will have struck a particularly harmonious chord in their ears.[79]

This paper began with Symmachus' appeal to the example of religious tolerance set by Valentinian. It is no mere coincidence that Ammianus' history being brought to fruition in a Roman setting some half-dozen years later should also remark favourably upon Valentinian's undogmatic and non-coercive treatment of religion. For the most part, as Ammianus himself had graphically documented in the course of his narrative, Rome's traditional senators had little to regret about the passing of Valentinian's government;[80] but by the spring of 391 they would have reason to look back appreciatively, in one respect at least, on a ruler who 'was not in the habit of bending the necks of his subjects to his own form of worship'. Meanwhile, as we have seen, what was to become the canonical Christian tradition, beginning with bishop Ambrose, was also in the process of 'heroising' Valentinian's perceived respect for its own ecclesiastical version of religious independence: Christian bishops and pagan senators alike found common cause in singing the praises of Valentinian's *moderamen principatus*.

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[78] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 14 finds a 'predominance of senatorial governors' among the Italian provinces. For Albinus, see *PLRE* I, Ceionius Rufius Albinus 15.

[79] Neri, 'Ammianus' definition of Christianity', was concerned to draw attention to the Christian audience (including Theodosian officials?) for the historian's critique of Constantius' interventionist religious policy; but that should not lead us to neglect those of the surviving pagan establishment at Rome who were also among Ammianus' audience.

[80] As well surveyed by Humphries, 'Image of Valentinian I'. For the classic portrayal of the "clash between Valentinian I and the guardians of the traditions of Rome", see A. Alföldi (tr. Mattingly), *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire* (Oxford 1952) Ch. 4.

# THE CHRONOLOGY OF VALENS' DEALINGS WITH PERSIA AND ARMENIA, 364–378 CE

Noel Lenski

*Abstract*: This article reexamines the chronology of foreign affairs on Rome's eastern frontier during the reign of Valens. Questions of strategy are avoided in favor of a systematic treatment of the order and dating of events. Ammianus provides the basis for a narrative and a number of chronological indicators in passages at 27.12, 29.1, 30.1–2, and 31.7. These are fleshed out with passages from the Armenian Epic Histories, Themistius, and the ecclesiastical historians. When brought into synergy with the chronological indicators of the Theodosian Code, this information is made to yield a datable order of events involving Persia, Armenia, Iberia, and the Saracens between 364 and 378.

The best chronology of Rome's dealings with Persia, Armenia and Iberia during the reign of Valens was established by Otto Seeck in 1906.[1] Seeck based his conclusions on two series of winters listed in Ammianus' narrative, the only narrative for the period to give us sound chronological indicators. Seeck combined his results from Ammianus with his chronological analysis of the *Codex Theodosianus* to fashion a largely convincing narrative for east Roman foreign policy during Valens' reign in his *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*.[2] Most schol-

[1] Otto Seeck, 'Zur Chronologie und Quellenkritik des Ammianus', *Hermes* 41 (1906) 481–539, at 520–521, 523, 525. Important chronological observations were made already at J. Marquart, 'Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran', *Philologus* 55 (1896) 213–244, at 219–227. Marquart himself drew extensively on the work of Henry F. Clinton, *Fasti Romani* (Oxford 1845) 460–492. The present article recreates the basis for the chronology used in chapter 4 of my *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century AD* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002), which does not deal with questions of chronology in detail. It is drawn from appendix 2 of my 1995 Princeton dissertation, which it heavily revises and expands. The two Armenian sources used throughout, the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'* (*Epic Histories*, hereinafter *BP*), and the histories of Moses Khorenats'i (hereinafter *MX*) are quoted in the translations of Nina Garsoïan (tr. and comm.), *The Epic Histories attributed to P'awstos Buzand* (*Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*) (Cambridge, Mass. 1989) and Robert W. Thomson (tr. and comm.), *Moses Khorenats'i History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, Mass. 1978).

[2] Otto Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, vol. 5 (4th ed.; Stuttgart 1921) 58–69 with 448–453. On difficulties of chronology in Ammianus more generally and on Ammianus' tendency to date military campaigns by sequences of winters, very much in

ars have since followed Seeck's chronology which is without question the fundamental work on the problem,[3] but many have not, especially because everyone since Seeck has treated chronology as secondary to larger arguments about foreign policy. The result is that a number of schemes have appeared, most of them less reliable than Seeck's, though some contain important insights.[4] Moreover, as we shall see, Seeck did not give full weight to sources other than Ammianus and the *Codex*. Thus, his scheme contains some important errors and remains unnecessarily vague on a number of issues. Because the chronology has not

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the Greek historiographic tradition, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 43–53, 181–182.

[3] Seeck is followed by G. Köhler, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Valens* (Diss. Jena 1925) 70–94; A. Solari, 'Il non intervento nel conflitto tra la Persia e Valente', *RFIC* 60 (1932) 352–358; Ernst Stein, J.R. Palanque, *Histoire du bas-empire*. vol. 1: *De l'état romain à l'état byzantin (284–476)* (Paris 1959) 186–187 with 205–206; Wolfgang Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Römische Geschichte*, Teil 4 (Berlin 1971) 322–324, 336–337, 348–350; André Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien, 325–395* (rev. ed.; Paris 1972) 175–177; Roger C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus. A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels 1975) 62–72; Alexander Demandt, *Die Spätantike. Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian, 284–565 n. Chr.*, HdAW III.6 (Munich 1989) 119. Cf. Marie-Anne Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome V, Livres XXVI–XXVIII* (Paris 1984) 270–273.

[4] Norman H. Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia in the Fourth Century', *English Historical Review* 25 (1910) 625–643, repr. in: Idem, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London 1955) 186–208, at 636–642 establishes his own chronology based on the much less reliable narrative of *BP*. P. Pascal Asdourian, *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Armenien und Rom von 190 v. Chr. bis 428 n. Chr.* (Venice 1911) 155–162 offers a chronology which comes closest to the one presented here, though he offers no explanations for the dates he assigns. A. Nagl, 'Valens 3', *RE* 2.7.2 (1948) 2097–2137, at 2113–2117 combines elements from Seeck and Baynes. René Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris 1973) 140–156 works with an extremely impressionistic chronology, also with no explanations for dates. R.H. Hewsen, 'The Successors of Tiridates the Great: A Contribution to the History of Armenia in the Fourth Century', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* n.s. 13 (1978–1979) 99–126 generates a chronology for the Armenian royal line that is directly relevant, basing his findings primarily on Moses Khorenats'i. Roger C. Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia between the Romans and the Persians at the End of the Fourth Century AD', *Historia* 36 (1987) 222–234, at 225–229, and Idem, *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds 1992) 30–39 generally follows Seeck for the early years but establishes his own chronology using some input from Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia', for the last years of the reign. Bernhard Gutmann, *Studien zur römischen Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike (364–395 n. Chr.)* (Bonn 1991) 170–183 uses Seeck as a basis but relies heavily on Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia', and *East Roman Foreign Policy* for his chronology. Geoffrey Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath of the Partition of Armenia in A.D. 387', *AHB* 14 (2000) 35–48, and in turn Geoffrey Greatrex, Samuel N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, Part II AD 363–630, A Narrative Sourcebook* (London 2002) 21–28 offer a chronology that combines elements from Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia', Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia' and Idem, *East Roman Foreign Policy*.

been systematically treated since Seeck, and in as far as new chronological schemes have appeared, they have not examined the problem systematically, we will reexamine this complex problem here in detail, taking into account the full range of sources.

Seeck was right to assume that, where Ammianus picks up the course of Romano-Persian relations at 27.12.1, he is not offering a detailed narrative of events in the years immediately following Jovian's disastrous peace treaty of July 363. Indeed, in the first few years after the treaty, the Persian shahanshah Šapur II seems to have taken only the territories granted him by the treaty while keeping out of Armenia, which had been left to determine its own loyalties in the aftermath of 363.[5] This period, lasting as it did at least three years, is covered by a single sentence which reports that Šapur first began gradually encroaching on Armenia through deception and by soliciting support from *quosdam optimatum et satrapas* (Armenian *naxarark* and the satraps of South Armenia) and by occupying the territory of others.[6] During this period, Valens was not unconcerned, for, as Ammianus, Zosimus, and Socrates report, he moved out from Constantinople and hastened toward Antioch at the end of the summer of 365 with the intention of forestalling potential trouble.[7] In the event, however, he never made it past Cappadocian Caesarea, for in this city he learned that Julian's cousin Procopius had revolted, and he was compelled to return west, first to defeat Procopius in May 366, and then to battle the Goths, who had supported the usurper, through the summer of 369. I have argued elsewhere that, at least down to 367, one of the reasons Valens felt able to remain far from the eastern frontier for so long was that, until this year, Šapur largely left Armenia alone.[8] The question arises, however, when precisely Šapur made his first decisive move by capturing and imprisoning the Armenian king Aršak II.[9]

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[5] Amm. 26.4.6; Zos. 4.4.1, which implies that Šapur began attacking Armenia immediately, is not to be trusted for chronological purposes, see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 141–142, 167.

[6] Amm. 27.12.2; cf. *BP* 4.50. More on Šapur's actions at this period at Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie*, 140–142; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 168–169.

[7] Amm. 26.6.11: *consumpta hieme festinans ad Syriam Valens*; Zos. 4.4.1 with 13.1–2; Socr. *HE* 4.2.4: Οὐάλης δὲ ᾗ τάχος ἐπὶ τὴν Συρίας Ἀντιόχειαν ὥρμησεν κτλ; cf. Soz. *HE* 6.7.10; Philost. *HE* 9.5.

[8] Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 167–168.

[9] *BP* is of little help for the chronology of Aršak's capture; though it offers figures for the period of war between Armenia and Persia, a period beginning with the rise of hostilities in 337 (or perhaps as early as 335) and ending with Aršak's capture, it

As noted, Seeck based his chronology on two sets of winters mentioned in Ammianus. The first of these consists of three winters, the last of which can be dated with some certainty to 370–371.[10] Seeck therefore held that the events associated with the first winter occurred in 368–369. The first part of his chronology can be laid out schematically:

Seeck's chronology (368–371)

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| 368 | | – Šapur captures Aršak II of Armenia (§3)<br>– Šapur replaces Sauromaces of Iberia with Aspacures (§4)<br>– Šapur establishes his agents Cylaces and Arrabannes in Armenia; they begin a siege of Artagerk' (§5–6) |
| winter 368–369 | (6) *rigente tunc caelo nivibus et pruinis* | – Cylaces and Arrabannes hold converse with Aršak's wife, P'aranjem, defect to her, and allow the devastation of the Persian siege force (§6–8)<br>– The Armenian prince Pap flees and is received by Valens (§9) |
| 369 | | – Valens sends Pap back east to Neocaesarea to pass time as a refugee (§9)<br>– Cylaces and Arrabannes appeal to Valens from Armenia to have Pap reinstalled (§9)<br>– Pap is returned to Armenia by Terentius (§10)<br>– Šapur learns of Pap's installation and invades Armenia (§11) |
| | (11) *mensibus quinque delitiscentes* | – Pap flees and hides in Lazica for five months (§11) |

gives two numbers (30 and 34 years) for this time span, and Procopius, who used an Armenian source, offers a third (32 years), cf. *BP* 4.20, 50, 51, 54; Procop. *Bell.* 1.5.10. On this problem, see Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 291 n. 19. Based on this and other Armenian sources, Hewsen, 'The Successors of Tiridates', 111 has argued that Aršak's capture by Šapur occurred in 367. The Armenian sources diverge from Ammianus on Aršak's fate; where Ammianus (27.12.3) reports a swift execution after Aršak was imprisoned in the fortress of oblivion (Andyuš), the Armenian sources (*BP* 4.52–54; *MX* 3.34–35; cf. Procop. *Bell.* 1.5.29) describe a more protracted imprisonment ending in suicide.

[10] Amm. 27.12.6, 12, 18. On the date of 27.12.18, see below at n. 39.

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| winter 369–370 | (12) *sidere flagrante brumali* | – Artagerk' falls; P'aranjem is captured (§12) |
| 370 | | – Arintheus marches from the Danube to Armenia (§13)<br>– Pap executes Cylaces and Arrabannes at Šapur's suggestion (§14)<br>– Arintheus' arrival prevents another Persian attack (§15)<br>– Terentius restores Sauromaces in Iberia; negotiates split rule in Iberia (§16–17) |
| winter 370–371 | (18) *reserata caeli temperie* | – Embassy of Šapur protests aid to Armenia and split of Iberia; threatens attack (§18) |
| 371 | 29.1.1 *exacta hieme* | – Battle of Bagawan (29.1.1–3) |

Ammianus' chronology is probably largely accurate, but a scheme like Seeck's, which takes account only of the winters Ammianus mentions, would seem to squeeze too many events into too few years. The problem of compression is particularly obvious with the events listed for 369. Pap is said to have escaped the besieged fortress of Artagerk' in the winter of 368–369;[11] fled 1200 km to Valens (who was then at Marcianople); then returned to Neocaesarea (another 900 km) where he was generously hosted and trained; Cylaces and Arrabannes, still in Armenia, learned of Valens' good treatment of Pap and asked Valens, 1200 km away, that Pap be returned as their king; Valens sent his approval and Pap was reinstalled in Armenia by the *comes* Terentius, but later discovered to be ruling in Armenia by Šapur; Šapur, still in Persia, organized an expedition which invaded Armenia and put Pap to flight once again; finally Pap went into hiding in Lazica for five months. Either we must assume that Pap had an impossibly busy year in 369, or we might rather postulate that Ammianus omitted mention of a single winter from his account, the winter of 368–369. The insertion of a winter into Ammianus' chronological scheme may, of course, make those inclined to see Ammianus as infallible uncomfortable, but Ammianus' omission need not reflect incompetence or even neglect on his part. Rather, it probably means only that he chose not to be specific

[11] Ammianus' Artogerassa was the Armenian fortress of Artagerk' in the district of Aršarunik'; cf. Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 447 with references.

at 27.12.9 about how long Pap remained in waiting at Neocaesarea (*morari*) enjoying the *liberali victu…et cultu* that he duly describes. More importantly, this hypothesis is supported not just by suspicions aroused by the crowded narrative for events in 369 under Seeck's scheme, but also by independent sources that can be used to check this revision to Seeck's—and in some sense Ammianus'—chronology.

The best Armenian source for the period, the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'* (*Epic Histories*), preserves a tradition according to which Pap was a hostage or guest of Valens. It is unlikely that this fifth-century source, based as it was on oral testimony from the fourth century, would have preserved the memory of this contact if it had lasted only the month or two allotted it in Seeck's chronology. Furthermore, the implication of *BP*'s testimony is that Pap's stay under Valens' protection was quite extended and involved the boy king's coming of age.[12] We can make better sense of *BP*'s account if we accept that Pap was received by Valens in early 368, spent time at the emperor's court (perhaps into the summer), and then, later in 368, was sent back to Neocaesarea where he spent the rest of the year and into the next. Only in 369, when Valens began drawing his Gothic campaign on the lower Danube to a close and preparing to move east, did he allow Terentius to reinstall Pap in Armenia, and even then he acted somewhat hesitantly since he insisted Pap be returned without royal trappings (*sine ullis insignibus*) so as not to violate the Persian peace of 363.

More decisively, a passage in Themistius' *Oration* 8 (Πενταετηρικός) supports this redating. Indeed, Seeck had himself noted the relevance of this very citation to the events in question. Because, however, he

[12] *BP* 4.15 claims that, when Pap reached puberty, he was sent to the 'land of the Greeks'; 4.55 says that Pap was with the 'king of the Greeks' when Artagerk' was first besieged (cf. *MX* 3.29). *BP* clearly preserves the memory of Pap's presence in Roman territory under Valens' stewardship, yet also seems to have elevated Pap's status there by converting him from a refugee to a hostage. A milestone from the road just west of Neocaesarea may further help with the dating. *AE* (1975) 785 = (1961) 266, 10km east of Yornus on the Neocaesarea-Amaseia road, records five sets of emperors, the fourth being: IMPP CAESS DD NN FL VALENTINIANO ET FL VALENTE ET GRATVISANO (sic) PERPETVI[s Augg]. Gratian's name (misspelled) was added in a different script, thus at a different date. It is just possible that a unit taking Pap east in 367 before they had learned of Gratian's accession (August 24, 367) carved the milestone and then recarved Gratian's name on their return in 368. Another milestone with the names of Valentinian, Valens and Gratian on the same route further east (Satala-Nicopolis) is also reported at Franz V.M. Cumont, Eugène Cumont, *Studia Pontica*, vol. 2: *Voyage d'exploration archéologique dans le Pont et la petite Arménie* (Brussels 1906) 1.319–320.

had himself misdated them to 369, he treated the Themistius citation rather as confirmation of his own chronological scheme. The passage in question reads:

> It is not surprising that Priam called Agamemnon blessed for bringing soldiers who outnumbered the Phrygians from Greece [*Il.* 3.182–190]. But now to protect you, a certain one rejecting his ancestral scepter—and that of no obscure kingdom—has emigrated and come as a good omen of victories in the East.[13]

Themistius probably refers to Pap, who had apparently just arrived at Valens' court when the oration was delivered.[14] As indicated by its title, *Oration* 8 was delivered to Valens on the occasion of his *quinquennalia*, celebrated on his *dies imperii*, March 28. Ammianus said that Pap fled Artagerk' in midwinter, and Themistius indicates that he had reached Marcianople by early the next spring, but the next spring of which year? When he approached the dating of Ammianus' text, Seeck had already written an earlier article dating an inscription from the fortlet dedicated by Valens in Scythia Minor '*tempore feliciter quinquennaliorum*' to 369. In his monumental *Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt*, then, the inscription was used to confirm the chronology proposed in 1906 for the events in Armenia: Valens, Seeck thought, had received Pap

[13] *Or.* 8.116 b–c: Ἐκεῖνο μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἀπεικότως ὁ Πρίαμος μακαρίζει τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα, ὅτι Φρυγῶν πλείονας ἦγε στρατιώτας ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος· σὲ δὲ ἤδη τις τὰ σκῆπτρα ὑπεριδὼν τὰ πατρῷα, καὶ ταῦτα οὐκ ἀφανοῦς βασιλείας, μετανάστης ἥκει δορυφορήσων, ἀγαθὸν οἰώνισμα τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἕω τροπαίων. The translation at Peter J. Heather, John F. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, Translated Texts for Historians 11 (Liverpool 1991) 31 is not reliable here.

[14] Asdourian, *Die politischen Beziehungen*, 158 n. 2 and Seeck, *Geschichte*, Vol. 5, 448–449 n. 26 seem to have been the first to connect this reference to Pap's flight. L.-S. Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs*, Vol. 5 (Venice 1732) 91–92; Dietrich Hoffmann, 'Wadomar, Bacurius und Hariulf', *MH* 35 (1978) 307–318, at 314–316; and Heather, Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, 23, 31 n. 5 believe that Themistius refers instead to the Iberian prince Bacarius (*PLRE* I, Bacurius), who would seem to fit better with Themistius' participle δορυφορήσων. Themistius' implication, however, is clearly rhetorical and should not be overstretched: the rhetor cannot have known precisely how long and in what capacity the prince would stay by Valens' side so soon after his arrival in Marcianople. For that matter, Pap was himself a warrior and fought with Valens' armies at Bagawan. The fact that he eventually turned on Valens and was assassinated by him should not prejudice our assumptions about what Themistius will have read into his arrival in 368. Thus, because Ammianus tells us that Pap was received by Valens in precisely this period (27.12.9), it seems safer to associate Themistius' prince with Pap. Bacurius is first attested in Roman service in 378 (31.12.16). Regardless, the precise identification of the prince does not affect this chronology since the Persians invaded Iberia and Armenia in the same year and will have driven out sitting royalty in both kingdoms simultaneously.

in early 369, and Themistius celebrated this in his quinquennial oration delivered on March 28 of that year.[15] Nevertheless, the inscription in question and Valens' *quinquennalia* have since been proven by André Chastagnol to date to 368.[16] Thus, Themistius' notice, when properly dated, indicates that Pap had fled Artagerk' already by the winter of 367–368. For this reason the inscription actually confirms the chronology proposed here, meaning that Pap must have remained at Neocaesarea for the entire year 368 during which Valens did nothing to remedy the situation in Armenia. Ammianus' chronological sequence can thus be proven to have omitted one winter, 368–369, and only picks up in 369 when Pap returned to Armenia under escort from Terentius (27.12.10), perhaps early in the year. Šapur's discovery of Pap's return and his consequent invasion of Armenia (27.12.11) eventually precipitated Pap's flight to the Caucasus for five months (autumn 369 until spring 370; 27.12.11) and ultimately resulted in the capture of Artagerk', in the winter of 369–370 (27.12.12).

This chronology might seem to contradict a notice in *BP* (4.55) that Artagerk' was besieged for 13 months. If Cylaces and Arrabannes began their siege in mid 367 and the fortress fell in the winter of 369–370, an ongoing siege would have lasted at least two and a half years, an extremely long period. Here again, we must assume that Ammianus is reporting only selectively and that there were in fact two periods of siege, or at least of intense siege activity. Though Ammianus does not state this explicitly, the circumstances of his narrative point in this direction, especially when combined with information from *BP*. At 27.12.7–8 Ammianus indicates that Šapur's agents in charge of the

[15] *CIL* 3.6159 = 7494 = *ILS* 770 with Otto Seeck, 'Zur Inschrift von Hissarlik', *Hermes* 18 (1883) 150–153 and Seeck, *Geschichte*, vol. 5, 448–449 n. 26; cf. already Otto Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius zeitlich geordnet*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 30 (Leipzig 1906) 302.

[16] André Chastagnol, 'Les Quinquennalia de Valentinien 1er et Valens', in: *Mélanges de Numismatique offerts à P. Bastien* (Wetteren 1987) 255–266, at 258–261. Chastagnol leaves open the possibility that Valens celebrated his *quinquennalia* on Valentinian's *dies imperii* (February 26) rather than on his own. Already in the year before Seeck's article, a 368 date had been proposed by Theodor Mommsen, 'Die Inschrift von Hissarlik und die römische Sammtherrschaft in ihrem tutelaren Ausdruck', *Hermes* 17 (1882) 523–544 = *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, 303–323. Further criteria for dating Valens' *quinquennalia* to 368 are laid out at Richard Burgess, 'Quinquennial Vota and Imperial Consulships in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', *Numismatic Chronicle* (1988) 77–96, at 84. On the date of Them. *Or.* 8, see now John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court. Oratory, Civic Duty, and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius* (Ann Arbor 1995) 168; Hartmut Leppin, Werner Portmann (translation), *Themistios Staatsreden* (Stuttgart 1998) 150.

siege, the Armenians Cylaces and Arrabannes,[17] defected to Aršak's wife P'aranjem and deliberately betrayed the Persian siege force under their command to devastation by a clandestine sortie from the besieged Armenians. In the aftermath of this treachery, Cylaces and Arrabannes defected entirely to P'aranjem and the Arsacids, which would have left the hobbled survivors from Šapur's siege force without leadership and forced them, we can assume, to break off operations. Only when Šapur's forces invaded Armenia again in early 369 did he resume a new siege (or perhaps reinforce the skeleton siege force remaining) and force the surrender of Artagerk' (Amm. 27.12.12). If the *BP*'s notice about a thirteen month siege is to be trusted, this second phase must have lasted from early 369 until early 370, for Ammianus indicates the fortress fell *sidere flagrante brumali*.[18] Confirmation that there may indeed have been two periods of siege would seem to be at hand in the fact that the *BP* names the officials charged with the (final, successful) siege as Zik and Karen, the names of two well-known Persian noble houses. Cylaces and Arrabannes were, by contrast, Armenian defectors, as Ammianus makes clear. If, as this divergence indicates, the siege operation was coordinated by two different sets of leaders, it seems likely that there were two different sieges, or at least two phases of an interrupted siege.

As Ammianus indicates, news of Šapur's invasion in 369 prompted Valens to send Arintheus with forces to restore Pap and shore up Armenia against another Persian invasion (27.12.13–15). This coincides with our knowledge that Valens brought his Gothic war to a close after a summer campaign in 369 and thereafter freed his army to take on the Persians. Valens' urgent concern for the Persian and Armenian situation and the role it played in convincing him to conclude a Gothic peace in mid 369 is hinted at by Ammianus, who reports that peace was granted the Goths on the Danube because the long Gothic war had increased *metus…hostilis*.[19] Taken properly, this phrase does not, as most have assumed, refer to the Gothic enemy's fear of the Romans.[20]

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[17] For a discussion of their identities see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 381–383.

[18] On divergences between Ammianus' account of the siege and that of *BP* see Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 303.

[19] 27.5.7: *Aderant post diversos triennii casus finiendi belli materiae tempestivae: prima, quod ex principis diuturna permansione metus augebatur hostilis.*

[20] E.g. J.C. Rolfe (tr.), *Ammianus Marcellinus*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, Mass. 1939) 33: 'First, because the long stay of the emperor was increasing the enemy's fears'; Walter Hamilton (tr.), *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354–378)* (Harmondsworth

Rather, going back to Sallust, *metus hostilis* is used of the Romans' fear of their own enemy.[21] This is a usage with which Ammianus seems to have been familiar, for he uses related constructions elsewhere.[22] Given that the Romans had just defeated the Goths, or at least brought them squarely under heel, Ammianus must here be falling back on the same trope and referring to the increasingly desperate situation with the Persians. Since Arintheus conducted the Gothic peace negotiations on the Danube in late summer 369,[23] he cannot have come east before this; indeed, he is likely to have marched for Armenia late that autumn. The next spring, 370, Arintheus apparently led Pap out of Lazica and back into Armenia, at the end of the king's five months in hiding.[24] Through the summer, the count's presence in Armenia prevented a second Persian invasion.

In the same summer (370), Valens sent Terentius to restore Sauromaces as king of Iberia.[25] Terentius advanced as far as the River Cyrus (Kur) and then reached an agreement to divide Iberia into Roman and Persian spheres of suzerainty at that river (27.12.16–17). This action in

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1986) 337: 'The enemy were alarmed by the emperor's long stay in their neighbourhood'; Marié, *Ammien Marcellin*, 117: 'En premier lieu, le long séjour de l'empereur augmentait la crainte des ennemis'; Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 67: 'erstens, weil die Furcht der Feinde infolge der lang andauernden Anwesenheit des Kaisers zunahm.'

[21] Sal. *Iug.* 41.2, where he attributes the rise of factionalism in Rome to the elimination of Carthage as a foe and the consequent disappearance of *metus hostilis*: *metus hostilis in bonis artibus civitatem retinebat*, cf. 105.3; *Hist.* 1.12: *Postquam remoto metu Punico*. Further discussion and citations on *metus hostilis* at George M. Paul, *A Historical Commentary on Sallust's Bellum Jugurthinum* (Liverpool 1984) 124–125, especially Liv. 1.19.4: *metus hostium*.

[22] This is the only instance in Ammianus of the adjective *hostilis* with the abstract noun *metus*. Forms of *hostilis* do, however, occur with the participle *metuens*, and they are always used in this objective sense (15.5.25: *nihil metuens hostile*; 20.10.2: *nihil metuentes hostile*; cf. 29.5.19: *nihil hostile operientem exercitum*; 29.6.6: *cum nihil exspectaretur hostile*). See also the use of *metus* applied objectively to the Goths when their revolt pulled Rome away from the Persian frontier in 377 (30.2.8), a mirror image of the situation in 369, which confirms the interpretation offered here.

[23] Amm. 27.5.9. For the date of the Gothic treaty in late summer 369 see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 132–133 n. 101; contra R. Malcolm Errington, 'Themistius and his Emperors', *Chiron* 30 (2000) 861–904, at 902–904.

[24] Amm. 27.12.15, cf. 13. In fact, Ammianus does not state explicitly that Arintheus restored Pap but implies as much. The date is widely agreed upon: Seeck, 'Zur Chronologie', 520–521, followed by Stein, Palanque, *Histoire*, 187 n. 171; Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 34. Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia', 638–639 dates Arintheus' march to 371.

[25] *PLRE* I, Terentius 2 has Terentius restore Pap in 370 and escort Sauromaces back into Iberia in the same year. This fails to recognize that the two incidents are broken by a winter in Ammianus' narrative.

Iberia apparently postdated Arintheus' arrival in Armenia since Šapur sent two embassies to Valens in 370, the first to protest only the reoccupation of Armenia and the second to impugn both the Iberian and Armenian dispositions (27.12.15, 18). Thus Terentius was apparently not sent into Iberia until after Valens had arrived in the East in the summer of 370. Valens is first firmly attested on the eastern frontier at Hierapolis on August 10, 370,[26] however, he probably arrived earlier. If we follow Seeck in dating *Cod. Theod.* 10.19.5 to April 30, 370, Valens had already reached Antioch by this date.[27] Since he almost certainly presided at the dedication of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople on April 9, 370,[28] he apparently sped to Antioch in just twenty-one days.[29] The rapidity of his march is confirmed in the literary sources.[30] After arriving, Valens disposed his armies in Armenia and Iberia and thereby helped further to forestall Persian actions.

Some time in late autumn 370, Valens hastened back to Constantinople, where he remained until the late spring of 371.[31] He was probably anxious to deal with the unrest which had broken out over a dispute about the episcopal successor of Eudoxius, who died very soon after

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[26] *Cod. Theod.* 1.29.5, cf. 7.13.6 (September 18), 16.2.19 (October 17, MSS 365), with Federico Pergami, *La legislazione di Valentiniano e Valente (364–375)* (Milan 1993) 288.

[27] Otto Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr. Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit* (Stuttgart 1919) 71–72, 239; cf. Pergami, *La legislazione*, 448, 503.

[28] The dedication is dated at *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 370; *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 370; Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 370; Socr. *HE* 4.14.1. There is no guarantee that Valens was present, though it is doubtful he would have left Constantinople, where he had certainly spent the early part of 370, in advance of so momentous an occasion. So too Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 251.

[29] The journey from Constantinople to Antioch is *c.* 1,000 km. Valens would have to have moved at 48 km per day, considerably faster than the average speed of 20–30 km per day typical for an imperial journey, on which see Helmut Halfmann, *Itinera Principum. Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich* (Stuttgart 1986) 86.

[30] Zos. 4.11.4: ἐπὶ τὸν κατὰ Περσῶν ἠπείγετο πόλεμον; Socr. *HE* 4.14.1: τότε γοῦν ὁ βασιλεὺς Οὐάλης πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν σπεύδων ἄπῃρεν ἀπὸ τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως; Soz. *HE* 6.13.1, 15.1; cf. *MX* 3.29.

[31] Valens is attested in Antioch as late as October 30, 370 (*Cod. Theod.* 15.2.2 with Seeck, *Regesten*, 71, 241; Pergami, *La legislazione*, 470) but was in Constantinople by December 8, 370 (*Cod. Theod.* 11.31.6 with Seeck, *Regesten*, 36, 241) until as late as May 1, 371 (*Cod. Theod.* 11.1.14 with Seeck, *Regesten*, 27, 241). Pergami, *La legislazione*, 530, 543–545, 617–618 offers faulty solutions to the dates of these latter two constitutions based on a misunderstanding of Valens' movements. Even so, he agrees with Seeck that Valens is well attested in Constantinople in early 371. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 252 derives from Seeck.

Valens departed from Constantinople in early spring 370.[32] Valens had reached Nicomedia when he received news of Eudoxius' death and the ensuing tensions resulting from the selection of a successor. To quell the nascent uprising, he had sent a troop unit back to Constantinople, but then quickly continued east to shore up the volatile situation on the eastern frontier in summer 370.[33] By the winter of 370–371, he had more time to return to Constantinople and to ensure that no further disturbances would arise. Here we must keep in mind that it was Procopius' revolt in Constantinople in late September 365 which had pulled him away from his first attempt at eastern campaigns.[34] Valens' readiness to journey all the way back to Constantinople in the same year he had left it must have stemmed, in large part, from a desire to avert a similar crisis. Furthermore, a famine is recorded as having plagued Phrygia and much of central Anatolia in 370. Indeed, Socrates reports that the food crisis was so severe that it forced many provincials to flee to Constantinople for free grain distributions, rendering Valens' presence there all the more urgent.[35]

The following spring and summer, 371, Valens returned to the East at a much more measured pace.[36] This is reflected in Zosimus, who reports two journeys of Valens from Constantinople to Antioch, the one hurried and the second protracted by Valens' labors settling administrative affairs along the way.[37] Though he does not mention Valens'

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[32] Dated at Socr. *HE* 4.14.2.

[33] Socr. *HE* 4.15.1–5: εὐλαβούμενός τε μή τις ἐκ τῆς παρατριβῆς τῶν ὄχλων γενομένη στάσις ἀνατρέψῃ τὴν πόλιν, στρατιωτικὴν χεῖρα ἐκ τῆς Νικομηδείας εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν ἔπεμψεν; Soz. *HE* 6.13.1–3: δείσας δὲ περὶ τῆς πόλεως μὴ τι πάθοι ὑπὸ στάσεως, συνεῖδεν πέμψαι στρατιώτας εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν, οὓς ἱκανοὺς ἐνόμισεν εἰς τοῦτο; cf. Theoph. AM 5861 (a. 369–370); Zon. 13.16; Cedrenus, *Chron.* p. 544.

[34] See Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 72–73, 168.

[35] Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 370; *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 370; Socr. *HE* 4.16.7–17.1. More sources and discussion at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 388–390.

[36] Valens is last attested in Constantinople on May 1, 371 at *Cod. Theod.* 11.1.14 with Seeck, *Regesten*, 27, 241; Pergami, *La legislazione*, 324, 545.

[37] Zos. 4.11.4, quoted above n. 30; 4.13.1: Οὐάλης ὁ βασιλεύς, ἐφ' ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὥρμητο, κατὰ Περσῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ἑῴαν ἐστέλλετο, προϊών τε σχολαίως ἐβοήθει τὰ δέοντα πρεσβευομέναις ταῖς πόλεσι, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ κατὰ τὸ προσῆκον ᾠκονόμει, τοῖς δίκαια αἰτοῦσι ῥᾳδίως φιλοτιμούμενος τὰ αἰτούμενα. My interpretation contradicts the translation and interpretation of François Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle*, vol. 2.2 (Paris 1979) 273–275, cf. 355–356 n. 128, who would holds that the 4.11.4 and 4.13.1 are linked and would seem to refer to a single journey in 370. For this reason he is inclined to impugn Zosimus' testimony based on our knowledge that Valens made two journeys interpunctuated with a hasty return trip to Constantinople. To be sure, of itself Zosimus' text does not make clear that two journeys occurred, but read properly, it gives strong hints

intervening return to Constantinople, one can assume this would have been included in his source, Eunapius. Valens' slow return to the East is also attested by the laws of the *Codex Theodosianus*, which have him in Ancyra still as late as July 13, 371.[38] Valens' dispositions in Armenia and Iberia in 370 had drawn threats from Šapur that the peace was abrogated and that Persian forces would invade Armenia at the end of the winter (27.12.18: *reserata caeli temperie*). This winter, the last of the three mentioned by Ammianus at 27.12, clearly refers to 370–371. Ammianus' next chronological indication on Persian affairs comes more than a book later at 29.1.1 (*exacta hieme*). This marker must introduce Šapur's promised invasion of Armenia, thus it must refer to the end of the same winter as that with which Ammianus closed at 27.12.18.[39] In the spring of 371, the Persians advanced as far as Bagawan, in the district

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that his original source (Eunapius) did. Paschoud translates the phrase pointing to the first journey (4.11.4) ἐπὶ τὸν κατὰ Περσῶν ἠπείγετο πόλεμον: "sans délai il s'occupa de la guerre contre les Perses." This misses the sense of motion implicit in ἐπείγεσθαι ἐπὶ = "to hasten toward" and thus implies that Zosimus has not yet intimated a trip to the east. When describing the second notice (4.13.1) at p. 356 n. 128, Paschoud asserts: "Le voyage de Valens décrit par Zosime au paragr. 1 doit être celui du printemps 370, puisqu'il mentionne ensuite le séjour à Hierapolis, qui se situe en été de cette année." By my reading, however, the first notice (4.11.4) already pointed to this earlier voyage of winter 370 and this second (4.13.1) to the second in summer 371. The reason for Paschoud's confusion becomes clear in his translation of 4.13.2: "Arrivé à Antioch, il **dirigea** en toute sécurité les préparatifs de guerre, et après y avoir passé l'hiver dans le palais royal, il **partit** au printemps pour Hiérapolis, puis de là **conduisit** ses légions contre les Perses, et lorsque l'hiver fut de nouveau là, il **revint** à Antioche; cependant que la guerre contre les Perses était ainsi différée…" Paschoud's translation uses the simple past rather than the imperfect, for he believes Zosimus is speaking of a single journey to Hierapolis based on his knowledge of *CTh* 1.29.5 indicating Valens' presence there in mid 370. Zosimus, however, uses the imperfect verb διώκει followed by present participles, all of which indicate continuous aspect, i.e. he is describing an activity that happened on an ongoing basis. For this reason, Paschoud is led into misrepresenting the very last clause quoted from his translation above. The Greek ἡ μὲν οὖν πρὸς Πέρσας οὕτως ἐτρίβετο μάχη, which again deploys the imperfect, has nothing to do the war being delayed ("était ainsi différée"). It means, rather: "thus on the one hand the war against the Persians **was being conducted** in this way…" At 4.13.2, Zosimus is thus refering not specifically to the summer of 370, when Valens did arrive at Antioch and move out to Hierapolis, but to Valens' general schedule of spending summers based at Hierapolis and winters at Antioch over the course of several years. Constantius operated in a fashion similar to Valens—winters in Antioch, summers in Hierapolis—during the 340s, Lib. *Or.* 18.207; cf. *Or.* 15.17; Amm. 23.2.6: *Hierapolim solitis itineribus venit* (Julian). See below at n. 47. Paschoud is followed by Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath', 37 n. 15 and Greatrex, Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier*, 14.

[38] *Cod. Theod.* 12.1.76 with Seeck, *Regesten*, 241; Pergami, *La legislazione*, 553; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 252.

[39] So also Seeck, 'Zur Chronologie', 523, followed by Stein, Palanque, *Histoire*, 187

of Bagrewand near Mount Npat. There, after some maneuvering by Valens' forces, who did not wish to be caught initiating an attack, they were defeated by Valens' generals Traianus and Vadomarius.[40] Skirmishes continued until a truce was concluded through mutual consent at the end of the summer and the leaders of the two armies departed.[41]

Ammianus reports that, following this Roman victory and the subsequent truce, Šapur returned to Ctesiphon to pass the winter (*hiemem Ctesiphonte acturus*) and Valens to Antioch (29.1.4). We can determine from a combination of sources that the first winter Valens spent in Antioch was that of 371–372.[42] We can also independently date the winter mentioned at 29.1.4 to 371–372 since Ammianus tells us that it was during his stay in Antioch this winter that Valens uncovered the thaumaturgical cabal of Theodorus and initiated his infamous magic and treason trials, datable to 372.[43] It is thus safe to conclude that Ammianus' series of three winters at 27.12 is resumed at 29.1.1 with a continuation of winter 370–371 and culminates in a fourth winter at 29.1.4 which is otherwise datable to 371–372. Given that Ammianus left out the winter of 368–369, we can account for five winters of eastern foreign policy, 367–368 through 371–372.

As noted, Ammianus tells us that Valens returned to Antioch in the winter following the battle of Bagawan. Valens is, however, first firmly attested there in the *Codex Theodosianus* only in spring 372.[44] The previous notice on his whereabouts in the *Codex* puts him at Ancyra in July 371.[45] When exactly he arrived in Antioch is a matter of debate. In

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n. 172. Köhler, *Untersuchungen*, 84 dates the Battle of Bagawan to 372. Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia', 639 dates it to 373, followed by Nagl, 'Valens', 2116.

[40] Amm. 29.1.1–4 with further sources and discussion at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 175–177.

[41] Amm. 29.1.4: *pactis indutiis ex consensu, aestateque consumpta, partium discessere ductores*.

[42] Seeck, *Regesten*, 243 and below notes 50 and 52.

[43] Seeck, 'Zur Chronologie', 523–524; *Regesten*, 243 argues that the trials began at the end of 371 and continued into 372. Ammianus' version of the trials covers 29.1.4–2.28. Further sources and discussion on the magic and treason trials in Rome and Antioch at Franz Josef Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens und die heidnische Opposition* (Bonn 1995) 86–168; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 241–246; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 218–234; A. Coşkun, 'Ammianus Marcellinus und die Prozesse in Rom (a. 368/69–71/74)', *Tyche* 15 (2000) 63–92; Rita Lizzi-Testa, *Senatori, Popoli, Papi. Il governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani* (Bari 2004) 209–223.

[44] Valens is first attested near Antioch at Seleucia (in Pieria or ad Calycadnum?–neither far from Antioch) on April 4, 372 (*Cod. Theod.* 11.4.1) and at Antioch on April 13, 372 (*Cod. Theod.* 6.4.19).

[45] See n. 38.

an influential article, Gerhard May argued that in the period between mid-summer 371 and early winter 372 Valens, who was then proceeding very slowly across Anatolia from Constantinople, arrived only as far as Caesarea before the end of the year, and remained there into early 372. This allows May, who was interested primarily in ecclesiastical affairs, to argue that Valens' famous encounter with Basil during the celebration of the Epiphany (January 6) occurred at the tail end of an extended winter stay in Caesarea.[46] That the Epiphany encounter occurred in this year is indeed probable, but that Valens would have departed Constantinople in mid 371 and proceeded only as far as Caesarea by the end of the year seems unlikely for two reasons.

First is the lack of concrete evidence. May has demonstrated that extant evidence allows us to account for five visits of Valens to Caesarea: 1) early 365 eastbound; 2) early 370 eastbound; 3) late 370 westbound; 4) late 371 eastbound; 5) early 378 westbound. May has also shown that the Epiphany encounter cannot have occurred during the first through third of these journeys, for Basil was not yet bishop during the first and neither the second nor the third occurred during Epiphany. He argues, rather, that the Epiphany encounter had to occur during the fourth journey to Caesarea, which, he therefore assumes, must have stretched from late 371 into the first week of 372. The fact is, however, that it need not have occurred during any of these known journeys. Our knowledge of Valens' itinerary during this period is in fact characterized by many sizeable gaps during which Valens could have visited Caesarea. This is especially so because one pattern that seems consistent is that Valens tended to spend his winters between 371 and 378 in Antioch, where he was at most two weeks journey from Caesarea.[47] To assume that we must date the Epiphany encounter to a year when we have confirmed testimony that he traveled through Caesarea

[46] Gerhard May, 'Basilios der Grosse und der römische Staat', in: B. Moeller, G. Ruhbach (eds.), *Bleibendes im Wandel der Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen 1973) 47–70, at 49–57. The encounters between Valens and Basil are recorded at Greg. Naz. *Or.* 43.44–57; Greg. Nys. *Eun.* 1.120–143; *In laud. Bas.* 10.14; Ruf. *HE* 11.9; Socr. *HE* 4.26.16–24; Soz. *HE* 6.16.1–10; Thdt. *HE* 4.19.1–16; Theophan. AM 5868 (a. 375); Cedrenus, *Chron.* pp. 547–548. Following an older tradition, J. Bernardi, *Gregoire de Nazianze, Discours 42–43*, SC 384 (Paris 1992) 234 dates the incident to January 6, 371, clearly impossible given that Valens was in Constantinople. Paul J. Fedwick, 'A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea', in: Idem (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea. Christian, Humanist, Ascetic, A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, part 1 (Toronto 1981) 3–19, at 13 dates to 371–372 or 372–373.

[47] Seeck, *Regesten*, 243–251.

is thus to beg the question. While there are other reasons to argue that the Epiphany encounter is likely to have occurred in January 372,[48] it need not follow that Valens had to pass the latter part of 371 and the early part of 372 in Cappadocia. Indeed, there is reason to think that Valens is likely to have reached Caesarea for the Epiphany encounter coming not from the West, as May assumes, but from the East, most likely from Antioch. Theophanes' late but often reliable *Chronographia* initiates its description of the Epiphany encounter with the report that Valens had journeyed to Caesarea 'from the East.'[49]

The second reason for doubting May's assumption that Valens spent the period from late 371 until early 372 in Caesarea is that we have other evidence that the emperor reached Antioch already in the autumn of 371. A notice in Libanius tells us that Valens arrived in Antioch with his army not long after Libanius' 57th birthday, which occurred in the summer of 371. The event remained memorable for Libanius because he had delivered a panegyric to Valens following the emperor's arrival.[50] Valens had of course passed through Antioch already a year and a half earlier, but he stayed only briefly before moving out to Hierapolis to direct the restoration of the crumbling eastern frontier. He thus had little time for panegyrics in early 370. On his return in 371, however, Valens was establishing Antioch as a permanent base where he would reside for the next seven winters. He thus had more time for civic niceties. Because Libanius is unlikely to have associated Valens' arrival and the panegyric with his 57th birthday unless the two were closely connected chronologically, we must assume that Valens' second

[48] May, 'Basilios der Grosse', 54, with reference to Greg. Naz. *Or.* 43.53, notes that 372 was when Basil's relationship with Valens began to enjoy the flourish which Gregory says the encounter initiated. Furthermore, Greg. Naz. *Or.* 43.54 locates the death of Valens' son, Valentinian Galates, in the period immediately following the Epiphany encounter. In an oration delivered on March 28, 373, Themistius (*Or.* 11.152d–154b) prays that God provide Valens with a successor, indicating that the boy had already died by this date. Indeed, Galates' death is likely to have occurred at least a year earlier for such optimistic rhetoric to have been palatable to an emperor who took his son's passing with as much grief as Valens did, cf. Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 91–92.

[49] Theophan. AM 5868 (a. 375): Οὐάλης δὲ πᾶσαν ἐκκλησίαν πορθήσας ἦκεν εἰς Καισάρειαν ἐξ ἀνατολῆς κατὰ τοῦ θείου Βασιλείου μαινόμενος. Marie-Madeleine Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie zu den Schriften Gregors von Nazianz* (Bonn 1960) 41–42 nn. 46–47, who also dates to 372, assumes that Valens reached Caesarea from the East.

[50] Lib. *Or.* 1.143–144. On Libanius' birthday see A.F. Norman (tr.), *Libanius, Autobiography and Selected Letters*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. 1992) vol. 1, 211 n. b; Idem (tr. and comm.), *Libanius Autobiography (Oration I)* (Oxford 1965) 190.

arrival in Antioch occurred in the fall of 371.[51] Valens' arrival in Antioch in late 371 is further confirmed by a notice in Malalas which places his *adventus* on the 10th of November in the 14th indiction.[52] Despite his many inaccuracies, Malalas is generally reliable on the local history of Antioch.[53] The precision of the calendar date would seem to reflect an official recording of the reception of Valens and his entourage into the city. The indiction date is more problematic for the same reason all indiction dates are: what can be taken as the starting date of the indiction cycle in question?[54] More precisely, is Malalas following the Constantinopolitan indiction cycle dated in 15 year intervals from September 1, 312, or the Egyptian indiction cycle, which ran eight months later? Fortunately, Malalas was fond of indiction dates, which he uses no less than fifty times.[55] These include the dating of one other event in the reign of Valens, a major earthquake at Nicaea which Malalas places in September of the 11th indiction in Valens' reign.[56] We know from several other sources that the earthquake in question actually occurred on October 11, 368, i.e. in the 11th Constantinopolitan indiction.[57] Malalas must then have been using Constantinopolitan indiction dates, which would mean that his date for Valens' grand arrival in Antioch falls on November 10, 371.[58] Whether Valens visited Caesarea early in 372, as

[51] May, 'Basilios der Grosse', 53 contends that Libanius' precise chronological indicator is to be interpreted only loosely, not a sound argument.

[52] Malalas *Chron.* 13.30: Γενόμενος οὖν ὁ αὐτὸς Βάλης ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τῆς Συρίας μετὰ τοῦ πλήθους τῆς στρατιωτικῆς δυνάμεως μηνὶ νοεμβρίῳ δεκάτῃ, ἰνδικτιῶνι ιδ, διέσυρεν ἐκεῖ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ποιῆσαι μετὰ Περσῶν τὰ πάκτα τῆς εἰρήνης· καὶ ἐποίησε τὰ πάκτα ἐπὶ ἔτη ἑπτά, τῶν Περσῶν αἰτησάντων εἰρήνην καὶ παραχωρησάντων τὸ ἥμισυ τοῦ Νιζτίβιος.

[53] See Elizabeth Jeffreys, Brian Croke and Roger Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*, Byzantina Australiensia 6 (Sydney 1990) 178–179, 204–209.

[54] On the problems posed by indiction dates, for ancient and modern historians, see V. Grumel, *Traité d'études Byzantines* 1, *la chronologie*, Bibliothèque byzantine (Paris 1958) 192–206; André Bataille, *Traité d'études Byzantines* 2, *les papyrus*, Bibliothèque byzantine (Paris 1955) 45–46; Roger S. Bagnall, Klaas A. Worp, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (2nd ed.; Leiden 2004) 3–42.

[55] For a full list see Jeffreys et al., *Studies in John Malalas*, 149–151.

[56] Malalas *Chron.* 13.35.

[57] *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 368; *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 368 (p. 557); Socr. *HE* 4.11.4; Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 368. Further sources at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 388 n. 13.

[58] For the occurrence of the 14th indiction beginning in September 371, see Grumel's 'Table Chronologique Générale' at *Traité d'études Byzantines* 1, 241. This very indiction date is often confused for 370, the Egyptian date, as at Clinton, *Fasti Romani*, 476; Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath', 39–40; Greatrex, Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier*, 249 n. 46. May, 'Basilios der Grosse', 52–53 dates it to 369, perhaps a *lapsus*, but one that fits all too well with his readiness to dismiss this source.

indeed seems likely, cannot be determined with certainty based on our sources. Whatever the case, he did so only after having established his winter quarters in Antioch in late 371.

Malalas' notice is useful not only for rebutting arguments about an extended stay of Valens in Caesarea, but also for helping establish further details about the chronology of Romano-Persian relations in this period. It claims that, on his arrival in Antioch, Valens established a seven year agreement (καὶ ἐποίησε τὰ πάκτα ἐπὶ ἔτη ἑπτά) with the Persians. This corresponds with Ammianus' information that Valens had made a truce with the Persians following the Battle of Bagawan in 371 (*pactis indutiis*; 29.1.4). Furthermore, this truce did indeed serve as an effective peace arrangement for the following seven years. We know from a number of sources that peace prevailed on the Persian frontier in the years following 371. Ammianus tells us directly that the Persian conflict went into abeyance in 372 and confirms that it remained thus for the years to come;[59] Themistius reports that Valens had ceased from war in 373 and continued to maintain peace in 375;[60] a less precise notice from Socrates (4.32.1) also indicates that there were no barbarian disturbances on the frontiers in 375. Ammianus' account does not mention a single clash between Romans and Persians from the skirmishes after Bagawan (371) until the penultimate year of Valens' reign (377),[61] seven years when reckoned inclusively. Thus, Malalas' 'seven year agreement' was in fact a reality. The Armenian tradition even provides us with the reason for Šapur's reluctance to continue fighting with Rome. A war with the K'uşans kept the Persian army busy in the years after the battle of Bagawan.[62] This does not mean that Valens withdrew his armies from the frontier. Themistius makes it

[59] Amm. 29.1.4 (371–372): *securus interim hostium externorum*; 29.2.21 (372): *Parthico fragore cessante*; 30.4.1 (374): *in eois partibus alto externorum silentio*.

[60] Them. *Or.* 11.144 a, 148 d–149 b (which states that Valens had not conceded peace to the Persians, but was holding off from attacking them, which fits well with Ammianus' truce, *pactis indutiis ex consensu*, at 29.1.4); *Or.* 13.166 c. *Oration* 13 was delivered in 376, but at this point in the speech Themistius is clearly referring to his journey to visit Valens in Mesopotamia late in 375. On the date and circumstances of these speeches, see G. Dagron, 'L'empire romain d'Orient au IVe siècle et les traditions politiques de l'hellenisme: le témoignage de Thémistios', *Travaux et Mémoires* 3 (1968) 1–242, at 22–23; Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 177, 181, 251; Leppin, Portmann, *Themistios Staatsreden*, 199–200, 214–217.

[61] Violence resumed in summer 377, see Amm. 30.2.7–8 with n. 82 below.

[62] *BP* 5.7, 37; *MX* 3.29; Procop. *Bell.* 1.5.30–40. On this K'uşan war see Seeck, *Geschichte*, vol. 5, 65; Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 313 n. 3.

clear that he had three divisions stationed in 1) the Caucasus, 2) Iberia and Albania, 3) Armenia, and a fourth praesental division nearer to 4) Mesopotamia.[63] Valens himself seems to have made annual trips to the territory of the eastern frontier with his army in these years. The scanty remains of his constitutions from the *Codex Theodosianus* indicate that he used Hierapolis as his base for summer frontier operations in at least 373 and 377, and a passage of Zosimus, already discussed, indicates that he likely used Hierapolis as his base every summer during his residence in the East.[64] In 373 and again 375 he seems to have visited nearby Edessa with his army,[65] and Themistius tells us that he was on the Tigris and Euphrates in 375.[66] A letter of Basil dated to 375 further hints that Valens' court was to be found in Mesopotamia when it was written.[67]

While Rome was at peace with Persia, Pap began creating problems inside Armenia. Before Arintheus was sent into Armenia, Pap had already tried to win favor with Šapur by murdering Cylaces and Arrabannes, the *naxarark* who had invited Valens' armies back into Armenia. Subsequently he also murdered the Armenian Patriarch Nerses I, sometime after summer 371,[68] and balked at accepting an epis-

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[63] Them. *Or.* 11.149 b with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 176. Leppin, Portmann, *Themistios Staatsreden*, 208 n. 30 wish to see only three divisions *in toto*, with the notice on Iberia and Albania being a gloss on 'the Caucasus.' Whether their speculation is correct, and I suspect it is not, matters little here. Riccardo Maisano, *Discorsi di Temistio* (Turin 1995) 475–477 coincides with my reading.

[64] *Codex Theodosianus* texts at Seeck, *Regesten*, 245, 249, cf. 241; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 252–253. Zos. 4.13.1–2 with Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 248 n. 4. To the laws of the *Codex Theodosianus* listed by Seeck and Barnes add *P. Lips.* 1.34, 35 and Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 174 n. 119.

[65] Sources and discussion at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 257–258.

[66] Them. *Or.* 13.163 c, 166 a, 168 c tell us that Themistius visited Valens on the Tigris in the year before his oration was delivered, cf. *Or.* 15.198 b. On the date, see above n. 60.

[67] Basil *Ep.* 213.2, with date at Friedrich Loofs, *Eustathius von Sebaste und die Chronologie der Basilius-Briefe* (Halle 1898) 22; Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile Lettres*, 3 vols. (Paris 1957–1966) vol. 2, 200; Wolf-Dieter Hauschild (tr. and comm.), *Basilius von Caesarea Briefe*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart 1973–1990) Vol. 2, 183 n. 334, 'Anfang 375.'

[68] In his reconstruction, P. Nerses Akinian, 'Die Reihenfolge der Bischöfe Armeniens des 3. und 4. Jahrhunderts (219–439)', *AB* 67 (1949) 74–86, at 85, dates Nerses' demise to 372; cf. C. Sanspeur, 'Une nouvelle liste de catholicos dans le Ms. Arménien 121 de Paris', *Handes Amsorya* 87 (1973) 185–202. Nina Garsoïan, '"Quidam Narseus". A Note on the Mission of St. Nerses the Great', in: *Armeniaca. Mélanges d'études arméniennes* (Venice 1969) 148–164, repr. in eadem, *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians* (London 1985) no. V at 157 proposes a death date of 373; cf. *PLRE* I, Papa; May, 'Basilios der Grosse', 54; Hewsen, 'The Successors of Tiridates', 119–120; Gutmann, *Studien zur römischen Aussenpolitik*, 179. In her commentary on *BP*, Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 395–396

copal successor approved through Roman authority. He acted repressively toward his *naxarark* lords and began to alienate them, and he actively courted favor with Šapur. He may even have demanded that some Roman cities, including Edessa, be surrendered to his authority.[69] Valens and his general in Armenia, Terentius, naturally became anxious at his erratic behavior and began plotting to replace him. An attempt to lure him to Tarsus and capture him failed miserably when Pap escaped the Romans at Tarsus, evaded a force sent to pursue him, and returned safely to Armenia.[70] This Tarsus debacle can probably be dated to 373 or 374 based on what we know of Valens' command structure in Armenia. As noted, before the Tarsus affair the army in Armenia was under the count Terentius.[71] After Pap learned that Terentius had tried to engineer his arrest, however, the count would no longer have been acceptable as an intermediary between the emperor and the Armenian prince. In fact, following the Tarsus affair, Ammianus tells us that Traianus, not Terentius, controlled the army in Armenia.[72] A letter of Basil to Terentius, dated to late 375, confirms that he had laid down his command some time back. The letter indicates that Terentius had been retired from service long enough to establish himself in a contemplative life at Antioch but had recently been recalled and was again conducting state business.[73] The letter thus implies that Terentius had retired a year or two earlier, implying that the Tarsus event occurred in 373 or 374. That it was more likely 374 can be surmised from Ammianus' collocation of the narrative on Pap's flight from

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is much more skeptical about the possibility of fixing a date. If we can take Basil *Ep.* 99 and 122, dated respectively to 372 and 373, to be connected with the selection of Nerses' successor, the murder would have occurred in the former year.

[69] See Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 177–179 for sources and discussion.

[70] Amm. 30.1.1–17.

[71] Amm. 30.1.2–4; Basil *Ep.* 99. Terentius' key role in Armenia is clear from the fact that he is one of only two generals to be named in *BP* for the period, the second being Ade (apparently Arintheus): *BP* 4.55, 5.1, 4–6, 32; cf. *MX* 3.36, 37, 39. *PLRE* I, Terentius 2 is thus incorrect to say that he was the general mentioned at Them. *Or.* 11.149 b in connection with the Albani and Iberi. He must rather have been the commander mentioned in the same passage in connection with Armenia.

[72] Amm. 30.1.18: *agentique tunc in Armenia Traiano et rem militarem curanti*; cf. 31.7.1–2.

[73] Basil *Ep.* 214, dated to autumn 375 by Loofs, *Eustathius von Sebaste*, 21; cf. Courtonne, *Saint Basile Lettres*, vol. 2, 202. Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea*, vol. 2, 10 and vol. 3, 185 n. 1 wrongly dates the letter to September/October 376 based on its connections to *Ep.* 215, which he incorrectly associates with the Gothic revolt in Thrace, which he incorrectly dates to 376; cf. Noel Lenski, 'Basil and the Isaurian Uprising of 375', *Phoenix* 53 (1999) 308–329, at 319 n. 50.

Tarsus (30.1) and eventual assassination immediately following: 1) the narrative of the revolt of the Quadi and Sarmatians (29.6.1–16),[74] and 2) the flood in Rome under the urban prefecture of Claudius Hermogenianus Caesarius (29.6.17–19). The former, it has been argued, began in summer 374,[75] and the latter is datable to late spring/early summer 374 by independent sources.[76] Terentius is thus likely to have bungled the first attempt on Pap in mid 374.

Pap continued to worry Valens, who once again plotted to suppress him, this time through the agency of his general Traianus. Valens ordered Traianus in a secret missive to win his way back into Pap's favor and then assassinate the errant king. This Traianus did, probably in 375.[77] The date can be surmised from three indices. First, Traianus needed time to placate Pap after the assassination attempt before he could maneuver him into the trap with which he killed him. Traianus joined the company of *naxarark* who feasted regularly with Pap and thereby mollified the king's anxieties to the point that he could invite Pap to a feast of his own with an unexpectedly deadly conclusion. This period of diplomatic intrigue would have taken at least a year after the Tarsus debacle of 374. Second, Themistius' notice that Valens moved all the way to the Tigris in 375 may indicate that the emperor wanted to be close at hand when the Armenian king was assassinated and replaced with a Roman nominee.[78] Third, and most importantly, we can derive a date of 375 from another set of winters listed in Ammianus that begins in the immediate aftermath of Pap's assassination. This same set of winters helps to establish the chronology for the last years of Valens' dealings with Persia and Armenia.

Ammianus' final section on Armenian affairs comes at 30.2.1–8 with a coda at 31.7.1–2. Here Ammianus' chronology can once again be

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[74] Cf. 30.1.1: *Inter has turbarum difficultates, quas perfidia ducis rege Quadorum excitavit, occiso per scelus.*

[75] Walter Heering, *Kaiser Valentinian I (364–375 n. Chr.)* (Diss. Jena 1927) 71.

[76] *PLRE* I, Claudius Hermogenianus Caesarius 7; André Chastagnol, *Les Fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire* (Paris 1962) 192–193.

[77] Amm. 30.1.18–21; cf. *BP* 5.32. Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia', 226 and Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath', 38 also date to 375. Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia', 640; *PLRE* I, Papa; Demandt, *Die Spätantike*, 119; Gutmann, *Studien zur römischen Außenpolitik*, 182; and Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 41 date Pap's murder to 374, as do scholars of Armenian, Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 223–226; Asdourian, *Die politischen Beziehungen*, 161; Akinian, 'Reihenfolge', 80; Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie*, 152; Hewsen, 'The Successors of Tiridates', 114–115; Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 397.

[78] See above n. 66.

reconstructed from two mentions of winter and a third of spring.[79] Unfortunately, the main passage at 30.2 is marred by a lacuna at 30.2.3 which introduces some confusion. Moreover, it is difficult to determine whether the temporal indications refer to the same winter or to two consecutive winters. Given, however, that Ammianus fits three Persian embassies (30.2.2, 3, 5) and two Roman embassies (30.2.4, 31.7.1) into the time span in question, it seems likely that two separate years were involved.[80] The last Roman embassy (31.7.1) is datable to 377: it was sent to conclude a settlement with Persia in order that Valens could withdraw his troops from Armenia to send them west against the Goths, who had revolted earlier that year.[81] Moreover, the last Persian embassy was followed by a Persian offensive against Roman targets to which Valens could not respond because of his preoccupation with the same 377 revolt, which had forced Valens to transfer his eastern forces to Thrace.[82] Thus we have a firm terminus for the final year mentioned, allowing us to reconstruct the rest of the chronology based on the winters which preceded the Roman embassy and Persian attacks of 377.

Šapur was disturbed to learn of Pap's murder since he had been courting the Armenian king in hopes of convincing him to defect to the Persian cause.[83] After Valens killed Pap in 375 and replaced him with a Roman nominee named Varazdat,[84] Šapur knew he had to change his approach if he hoped to make gains in Armenia. He turned to diplomacy and sent a first Persian embassy to Valens under the legate Arraces, who demanded a Roman withdrawal from either Armenia or Iberia (30.2.1–2: late 375). Valens responded by rejecting Šapur's offer of compromise (30.2.3); since he had the upper hand, he had

[79] 30.2.3: *hieme iam extrema*, 4: *principio sequentis anni*, 6: *mollita hieme*. Seeck, 'Zur Chronologie', 525 is more hesitant to date much of 30.1.1–2.8, though he does date the winter mentioned at 30.2.6 to 377–378, wrongly, I believe. Seeck, *Geschichte*, vol. 5, 65–68 with 451–453 reconstructs the chronology much as I do here, though he holds on to the notion that the winter mentioned at 30.2.6 is 377–378, and thereby leaves a gap in Ammianus'—admittedly fuzzy—chronology.

[80] The mention of spring at 30.2.4 refers to the spring following the winter mentioned at 30.2.3.

[81] The date of the Gothic revolt is confirmed at *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 377; Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 377. Prosper *Chron.* 1161–1163 confuses Jerome's chronology somewhat. See Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 328–329.

[82] 30.2.8: *haecque, ut statuerat, maturata confestim nec emendari potuerunt nec vindicari, quia rem Romanam alius circumsteterat metus, totius Gothiae Thracias licentius perrumpentis*.

[83] *BP* 5.32 confirms that Pap was close to defecting to Šapur; cf. *MX* 3.39.

[84] *BP* 5.32–34, 37; *MX* 3.40; Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 423–424.

nothing to gain from it. Though a lacuna intervenes in Ammianus' text, it is clear that Šapur responded with a second Persian embassy bearing a letter to Valens which said that the disagreement could not be resolved without the intervention of those who had been present at the 363 negotiations, some of whom, he had learned, were dead (30.2.3).[85] This embassy came at the end of winter (*hieme iam extrema*), that is, the winter of 375–376.[86] At a later date, Valens finally sent an embassy of his own, the first Roman embassy in this exchange, in which Victor, the *magister equitum*, and Urbicius, the *dux Mesopotamiae*, were asked to inform Šapur that he must either willingly leave Armenia alone and allow the return of Roman troops to Iberia the following spring (*principio sequentis anni*), or be compelled to do so (30.2.4–5). The spring referred to is probably that of 377 and the embassy would thus have occurred in the course of 376. This is made clear by Ammianus' notice that, at this point, Valens could afford to raise the stakes and threaten war because he was now able 'to choose between options rather than being forced to invent them'. Blockley noted rightly that Ammianus meant to imply that Valens' situation had improved, not, as previous translators had assumed, declined.[87] Nevertheless, he assigned the wrong reason to Valens' newfound courage. The emperor gained

[85] The chief Roman negotiators in 363 were Saturninius Secundus Sallustius and Arintheus, Lib. *Or.* 24.20; Amm. 25.7.7; Zos. 3.31.1; John Lydus *De mag.* 3.52; Malalas *Chron.* 13.27. The former is known to have retired a very old man in 366 and probably did not live long afterward, cf. *PLRE* I, Saturninius Secundus Salutius 3; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 106. The latter's death was lamented by Basil at *Ep.* 269, which cannot be dated based on internal evidence. Because Ammianus speaks of more than one negotiator (*aliquos*), this may provide a *terminus ante quem* of winter 375–376 for the death of Arintheus.

[86] Diplomatic activity in 375 was facilitated by the presence of Valens at the Tigris, above n. 66. If Seeck, *Briefe*, 303 is right to assume that Themistius came to Valens on the Tigris to offer condolences for the death of Valentinian (November 17, 375), this would place Valens there in early winter, when Ammianus indicates that the diplomatic exchanges were occurring.

[87] 30.2.4: *Ingravescente post haec altius cura imperator eligere consilia quam invenire sufficiens* etc. Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia', 227 n. 24 translates 'afterwards the emperor gave greater attention to the matter [i.e. Persian affairs], being now in a position to select his plans rather than respond, etc'. This translation is adopted at Greatrex, Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier*, 27. Contrast Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 309: 'After this the emperor's cares grew heavier. Now he was in condition rather to make a choice of plans than to discover any, etc'; Hamilton, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 391: 'These exchanges made matters worse, and the emperor, who was better at choosing between different options than at devising them, etc'; Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 207: 'Nach diesen Verhandlungen wurde die Sorge drückender, und der Kaiser, der sich besser darauf verstand, zwischen Plänen zu wählen als selbst welche zu ersinnen, etc.'.

confidence not because his war with the Saracens had just ended, as Blockley assumed,[88] but because he had just discovered that a huge mass of Goths was soon to migrate into Thrace and fill his ranks with auxiliaries. This embassy of Victor and Urbicius must then date shortly after the news of the Gothic request for entry into the empire had reached Valens in mid 376.[89]

During their travels to Šapur, Victor and Urbicius overstepped their mandate and actually received into Roman suzerainty two tiny regions (*regiones…exiguas*; 30.2.5), perhaps the satrapies of Asthianene and Belabitene, which would have provided easier access into western Georgia for the forces Valens was sending there to protect Sauromaces each summer.[90] Since this explicitly violated both the 363 peace and the 371 truce, Šapur now had a new bargaining chip. He sent a third embassy (30.2.5–6) in winter 376–377 officially offering these territories to Valens, apparently in exchange for Armenia or Iberia. Once again Valens rejected the embassy. By now, the emperor was finished with negotiation and began mustering a massive army (*parabantur magna instrumenta bellorum*) for an invasion of Persia which he promised for the close of the following winter (30.2.6: *mollita hieme*). For these purposes, Ammianus tells us, he was bargaining for the services of the Goths with all haste (30.2.6: *Scytharum auxilia festina celeritate mercante*), negotiations which had to have preceded the Gothic uprising in the first half of 377.[91] The negotiations at 30.2.6 must then have occurred during the winter of 376–377. The date is further confirmed by the sources just mentioned which inform us that Valens permitted the Gothic crossing of the Danube in 376 with the explicit intention of creating a massive auxiliary recruiting pool. Indeed, Ammianus (31.6.2) specifically states that Valens was mustering Gothic auxiliaries in early 377, at which time he must have still

[88] Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia', 227 n. 23 misdates the end of the Saracen revolt to early 376 and therefore incorrectly assumes that Ammianus, who otherwise never mentions the revolt, alludes to it here. Contrast Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 37–38, which rightly dates the Saracen uprising to 377. See further below n. 107.

[89] On the date see Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 376 with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 323–325. For Valens' cherished belief that he would create a massive auxiliary force from the Gothic exiles in order to swell his army, see Amm. 31.4.4; Eun. *fr.* 42; Socr. *HE* 4.34.3–4; Soz. *HE* 6.37.15–16; cf. Zos. 4.20.5, 26.1, and see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 317–319.

[90] Further argument at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 183 n. 164; Greatrex and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier*, 254 n. 40.

[91] The commercial metaphor surely alludes to the bargaining for slaves that eventually provoked the Goths to revolt in 377, Amm. 31.4.11, 6.5; cf. Eun. *fr.* 42; Zos. 4.20.6.

been planning to invade Persia.[92] Unfortunately for Valens, these plans collapsed when the Goths revolted and began ravaging Thrace (31.2.8). Once news of the revolt reached Valens in mid 377, he was forced to send a second and final Roman embassy to Šapur, once again led by Victor, to make a hasty agreement with the Persians on whatever terms were possible in the circumstances.[93] The subscriptions from the *Codex Theodosianus* make it clear that Valens must have overseen these negotiations from Hierapolis along the Tigris.[94] This makeshift arrangement allowed Valens to withdraw his units from Armenia in early summer 377 and send them west. After arriving in Scythia Minor, the forces sent by Valens from Armenia were defeated at the battle of Ad Salices that same summer.[95] Here we must jump back to the narrative at 30.2.7–8 which describes how Šapur had received Valens' rejection of his third embassy of winter 376–377 with fury and had ordered his Surena to take back the two tiny regions received by Victor and Urbicius and to attack any forces sent into Georgia to defend Sauromaces. Ammianus' notice that the Persian force accomplished this without resistance is explained by the notice that the Romans could offer no response because of the Gothic revolt. We come full circle then with a final confirmation of our chronological sequence.

The only question remaining to be resolved is why Valens himself did not depart for Constantinople in the same year that he sent his Armenian garrison west. Indeed, Valens' arrival in Constantinople is

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[92] Further sources on Valens' recruitment plans at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 317–319.

[93] 31.7.1: *et confestim Victore magistro equitum misso ad Persas, ut super Armeniae statu* ***pro captu rerum componeret impendentium***; Eun. *fr.* 42: βασιλεὺς δὲ ἐπειδὴ τούτων ἐπύθετο τῶν ἀδιηγήτων κακῶν, πρὸς μὲν τοὺς Πέρσας **ἀναγκαίαν εἰρήνην συνθέμενος**; Zos. 4.21.1: ὃ δὲ τὰ πρὸς Πέρσας ὡς ἐνῆν διαθέμενος…

[94] *Cod. Theod.* 10.16.3 (Jul. 6, 377); 7.6.3 (Aug. 9, 377); cf. 6.2.12.

[95] Amm. 31.7.1–2 narrates the advance force of *legiones ab Armenia ductas* sent to Thrace under Traianus and Profuturus. Amm. 31.7.5–16 narrates their defeat at the Battle of Ad Salices. Similar confirmation of the use of the forces from Armenia against the Goths in Thrace in 377 comes at 31.8.9–10, which narrates the conflict at Dibaltum on the Black Sea where the Goths defeated the *tribunus* Barzimeres, who had been in Armenia in 374 (30.1.11–17). *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 377 confirms the date of the first dispatch of troops against the Goths in this year. Basil *Ep.* 268, dated to 377 (Loofs, *Eustathius von Sebaste*, 48–49; Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea*, vol. 3, 233 n. 500) may be related to this troop transfer where it mentions: ὡς ἀκούομεν τοῦ στρατοπέδου τὴν πάροδον. Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Collapse of the Homoeans in the East', *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997) 3–16 at 10–11, however, would translate στρατόπεδον 'imperial court' rather than 'army' and thus prefer to see the letter as datable to spring 378, when Valens himself headed west against the Goths. This interpretation is possible but not necessary.

attested nearly one full year later, on May 30, 378.[96] Blockley suggested that Valens was detained with attempts to curb the collapse of Armenia by engaging in complicated negotiations with Persia between 377 and 378.[97] After the Roman withdrawal in the first half of 377, the Armenian king Varazdat killed the pro-Roman *sparapet* (Armenian commander) Mušeł Mamikonean and replaced him with the pro-Persian Manuel.[98] Manuel soon ousted Varazdat from the throne and began courting Persian favor, but he eventually established Armenian independence from both Rome and Persia around 380.[99] This situation only truly gave way when Armenia was split between pro-Roman and pro-Persian kings in 387.[100] Blockley holds that Valens stayed back in the East in 377 to haggle over the terms which Victor would set with the Persians and thereby put a brake on this collapse of his arrangements in Armenia.

The argument is flawed. After the withdrawal of Roman troops from the East in early 377, we have no evidence that Valens made efforts to defend Armenia or Iberia, let alone that he continued to negotiate over their status beyond the hasty embassy mentioned at 31.7.1. Indeed, Ammianus tells us the opposite: the emperor was unable to correct or avenge the attacks of Šapur's Surena against Iberia and Armenia in 377 because his hands were tied by the Gothic revolt (30.2.8). Yet he was also unable to deal with the Gothic revolt personally, apart from sending the advance force from Armenia under Traianus and Profuturus. This was surely because his own attentions were concentrated elsewhere. In Arabia the Saracen Queen Mavia had initiated a major military conflict which, for whatever reason, Ammianus has chosen not to report. His refusal to treat this event, as well as glossing over an uprising in the volatile territory of Isauria in 375 and a civil war among

[96] *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 378. Socr. *HE* 4.38.1 derives the same date from the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*. Basil *Ep.* 196, dated to 378 (Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea*, vol. 2, 177 n. 255) shows the degree of confusion which prevailed as preparations were made to move east in that year.

[97] Blockley, 'The Division of Armenia', 227–229; *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 37–38. Like Seeck (see n. 79), Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 349 n. 23 and Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath', 39–41 with n. 24 place the Surena's last embassy (Amm. 30.2.5–6) in late 377 and assume Valens was planning to attack Persia still in spring 378. This ignores the fact that Valens had already begun withdrawing troops from the eastern frontier in mid 377 to deal with the Gothic revolt.

[98] *BP* 5.35–36.

[99] *BP* 5.37–44.

[100] *BP* 6.1 with Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath'; Greatrex, Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier*, 28–30.

the Goths in the same period, has caused Ammianus to skew seriously our understanding of the foreign policy complications Valens faced at the end of his reign.[101]

The best evidence for the Saracen revolt of Mavia derives from the ecclesiastical historians Rufinus, Socrates, and Sozomen.[102] The latter two indicate that the revolt first broke out when Valens was attempting to mobilize his army from Antioch to Thrace to confront the Goths. Glen Bowersock has argued convincingly that this testimony should be used to date the event, yet he assumed that the departure from Antioch that Socrates and Sozomen mention should be dated to April 378 based on Valens' recorded arrival in Constantinople at the end of the following month.[103] I have shown elsewhere that this date should be pushed further back to the second half of 377.[104] Indeed, all indications are that Valens attempted to depart Antioch twice: 1) in mid 377, either after receiving news of the Gothic uprising or, at the latest, after learning of the defeat of his advance force by the Goths at Ad Salices in the late summer of 377, and 2) in April 378. The first departure was delayed by news of the Saracen uprising, which had to be suppressed before Valens could focus on the Goths. The fact that there was a stalled departure followed by a successful one is confirmed in Socrates, who reports Valens departing from Antioch twice, first immediately before the Saracens rose up and again after Valens had settled a treaty with them.[105] Even Ammianus hints at the same delay in Valens' plans for a westward

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[101] On the Isaurian uprising see Lenski, 'Basil and the Isaurian Uprising'. On the Gothic civil war see Idem, 'The Gothic Civil War and the Date of the Gothic Conversion', *GRBS* 36 (1995) 51–87; cf. Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 196–210.

[102] Ruf. *HE* 11.6; Socr. *HE* 4.36.1–12; Soz. *HE* 6.37.17–38.16. Cf. Thdt. *HE* 4.23.1–6; Theoph. AM 5869; Theod. Lect. *Epit.* 185. For secondary work see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 204–210 with earlier bibliography, to which add Umberto Roberto, 'Il magister Victor e l'opposizione ortodossa all'imperatore Valente nella storiografia ecclesiastica e nell'agiografia', *Mediterraneo Antico* 6 (2003) 61–93.

[103] Glen W. Bowersock, 'Mavia, Queen of the Saracens', in: *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte, Festschrift F. Vittinghoff*, Kölner historische Abhandlungen 28 (Cologne 1980) 477–495, rev. and repr. in: Idem, *Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire. Social, Economic and Administrative History, Religion, Historiography* (Goldbach 1994) 127*–140*, at 485–487. Others date the revolt to 376, including Maurice Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine* (Brussels 1982) 143–144; Greatrex, 'The Background and Aftermath', 38 n. 20. Irfan Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington 1984) 183–184, who dates to 375–378, is followed by Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 191 n. 49.

[104] Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 208–209.

[105] Socr. *HE* 4.36.1: Ἀναχωρήσαντος δὲ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας τοῦ βασιλέως, Σαρακηνοὶ οἱ πρώην ὑπόσπονδοι κτλ; 4.37.1: Κατὰ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον τοῦ βασιλέως Οὐάλεντος ἐκ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας ἀναχωρήσαντος.

departure, for he reports: 1) a planned departure from Antioch after Valens learned of the Gothic uprising in early 377, and 2) an actual departure from Antioch much later. The language of the two passages makes clear that the intentionality of the first was only fulfilled later in the reality of the second: 31.7.1: *ipse Antiochia protinus* ***egressurus, ut Constantinopolim interim peteret***, *Profuturum praemisit et Traianum* etc; 31.11.1: *Valens* ***tandem excitus Antiochia*** *longitudine viarum emensa venit Constantinopolim.*[106] Between these two sentences, Ammianus narrates the events of the second half of 377, including the disastrous defeat of Profuturus and Traianus at Ad Salices and the eruption of the Goths into Thrace south of the Haemus up to the Bosporus. Valens was thus stuck in Antioch watching his gains in Armenia and Iberia eroding during the second half of 377 even as he struggled to quell the Saracen revolt that prevented him from attempting to regain control of Thrace from the Goths.[107]

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[106] Compare Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 378: *Valens de Antiochia exire conpulsus.*

[107] Roberto, 'Il magister Victor', 77–81 modifies the arguments I lay out at *Failure of Empire*, 204–209 for a Saracen revolt beginning later in 377 in favor of a start date in spring 377 and concluding date by the end of that year. He builds on the assumption that: 1) the first of the two departure notices in Socrates refers to Valens' departure from Antioch for Hierapolis (rather than Constantinople), where Valens is attested through the summer of 377, and 2) the peace had been settled prior to the return of the bishops exiled by Valens and the deposition of the homoian bishop of Alexandria Lucius, who was originally commissioned to consecrate the Saracen bishop Moses as part of Valens' peace agreement with Mavia. The first argument is less convincing, for Socr. *HE* 4.36.1 (Ἀναχωρήσαντος δὲ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας) is clearly picking up on the notice just one sentence earlier at 4.35.3 (Ἐν θορύβῳ γὰρ γενόμενος, εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας **ἐπὶ τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν** ἦλθεν). The second carries more weight. The *Chronicon Edessenum* 33 (CSCO 3.4.5) indicates that some orthodox bishops returned from exile as early as December 27, 377; cf. *Chronicon Miscellaneum ad annum Domini 724 pertinens* 135 (CSCO 3.4.105); cf. Ruf. *HE* 2.13; Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 378; see also Rochelle Snee, 'Valens' Recall of the Nicene Exiles and Anti-Arian Propaganda', *GRBS* 26 (1985) 395–419; R. Malcolm Errington, 'Church and State in the First Years of Theodosius I', *Chiron* 27 (1997) 21–72 at 27–33; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 261. Roberto thus argues that the revolt had ended by this date. Unfortunately, however, we have no firm date for the return of Peter of Alexandria nor for the expulsion of Lucius, the only bishops relevant to the question. The closest indicator is Socr. *HE* 4.37.1 (cf. 5.3.2) which dates Peter's return around the time when Valens' was departing from Antioch, i.e. spring 378 (Κατὰ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον τοῦ βασιλέως Οὐάλεντος ἐκ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας ἀναχωρήσαντος, ἀνερρώννυντο οἱ πανταχοῦ ἐλαυνόμενοι, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν). This would point, rather, to a confirmation of the dating I propose, late 377, stretching into early 378. Two further sources point to a late 377/early 378 date for the Mavia revolt. The Arabic *Synaxarium* (PO I.862–863) celebrates the return from exile of the Egyptian holy brothers Macarii on Baremhât 13 (March 9). This is unlikely to have been in 377, for the Gothic revolt that forced Valens to relax his

Chronological table of events

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| 364–366 | Amm. 27.12.2 *primo* | – Šapur II arranges his newly acquired transtigritane satrapies and slowly tempts away Armenian *naxarark* and satraps |
| 367 | Amm. 27.12.3 *dein* | – Šapur captures Aršak II of Armenia (Amm. 27.12.3) |
| | Amm. 27.12.4 *deinde* | – Šapur replaces Sauromaces of Iberia with Aspacures (§4)<br>– Šapur establishes his agents Cylaces and Arrabannes in Armenia; they begin a siege of Artagerk' (§5–6) |
| winter 367–368 | Amm. 27.12.6 *rigente tunc caelo nivibus et pruinis* | – Cylaces and Arrabannes hold converse with Aršak's wife, P'aranjem, defect to her, and allow devastation of the Persian siege force (§6–8)<br>– Pap flees Artagerk' for Valens' court (§9) |
| 368 March 28 | Them. *Or.* 8.116 | – Pap has reached Valens in Marcianople |
| 368 | | – Valens sends Pap back east to Neocaesarea to pass time as a refugee (§9) |
| winter 368–369 | [winter omitted by Ammianus] | – Cylaces and Arrabannes appeal to Valens from Armenia to have Pap reinstalled (§9) |

religious persecution had not begun so early in this year. If it dates instead to March 9, 378, we can assume that Peter too returned to Alexandria and expelled Lucius from the see only in early 378. Also, a reference to raids apparently connected with Mavia's revolt is reported for December 28 and January 14 by the Greek and Syriac versions of the *Relatio Ammonii* (F. Combefis, *Illustrium Christi martyrum lecti triumphi* [Paris 1660] 88–132 at 95, and A.S. Lewis, *The Forty Martyrs of the Sinai Desert and the Story of Eulogius from a Palestinian Syriac and Arabic Palimpsest*, Horae Semiticae 9 [Cambridge 1912] 1–14 at 14). These sources report that the raids came as a surprise to the monastic communities around Mt. Sinai, indicating that these mid-winter dates are better seen as marking the early stages of the revolt rather than its last gasp.

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| 369 | | – Pap is returned to Armenia by Terentius (§10)<br>– Šapur learns of Pap's installation and invades Armenia (§11)<br>– Artagerk' besieged again under Zik and Karen (*BP* 4.55) |
| beginning in fall 369 | Amm. 27.12.11 *mensibus quinque delitiscentes* | – Pap flees and hides in Lazica for five months (§11) |
| winter 369–370 | Amm. 27.12.12 *sidere flagrante brumali* | – Artagerk' falls; P'aranjem is captured (§12)<br>– Arintheus marches from the Danube to Armenia (§13)<br>– Pap executes Cylaces and Arrabannes at Šapur's suggestion (§14) |
| 370 spring | Amm. 27.12.15 *denuo* | – Arintheus' arrival prevents another Persian attack (§15)<br>– Embassy of Šapur protests Armenian aid (§15.) |
| spring or summer | *Cod. Theod.* 1.29.5: August 10, 370, Hierapolis; cf. 10.19.5: April 30, 370, Antioch | – Valens arrives in Hierapolis via Antioch (Zos. 4.11.4; Socr. *HE* 4.14.1–2)<br>– Terentius restores Sauromaces in Iberia; negotiates split rule in Iberia (Amm. 27.12.16–17) |
| fall or winter | *Cod. Theod.* 11.31.6: December 8, 370, Constantinople, with n. 31 above | – Valens returns to Constantinople |
| winter 370–371 | Amm. 27.12.18 *reserata caeli temperie*[108] | – Embassy of Šapur protests aid to Armenia and split of Iberia; threatens attack (§18) |

[108] I.e., the embassy was sent in winter, and Šapur used it to threaten an attack 'when mild weather returned.'

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| 371 spring | Amm. 29.1.1 *exacta hieme* | – Šapur's forces invade Armenia (Amm. 29.1.1)<br>– Traianus and Vadomarius march to defend Armenia (Amm. 29.1.2) |
| summer | *Cod. Theod.* 11.1.14: May 1, 371, Constantinople, with Seeck, *Regesten*, 27, 241; *Cod.* Theod. 12.1.76: July 13, 371, Ancyra, with Seeck, *Regesten*, 241 | – Valens departs Constantinople and returns slowly to eastern frontier (Zos. 4.13.1–2)<br>– Battle of Bagawan (Amm. 29.1.3) |
| fall | Amm. 29.1.4 *aestateque consumpta*<br>Malalas 13.30: Nov. 10, 371;[109] cf. Lib. *Or.* 1.143–144 | – Truce concluded (Amm. 29.1.4)<br>– Valens returns to Antioch to winter |
| winter 371–372 | Amm. 29.1.4 *hiemem Ctesiphonte acturus* | – Šapur returns to Ctesiphon to winter |
| 372 | *Cod. Theod.* 11.4.1: April 4, 372<br>*Cod. Theod.* 6.4.19: April 13, 372 | – Valens attested in Seleucia (Pieria? ad Calycadnum?)<br>– Valens in Antioch |
| winter 372–373 | | |
| 373 summer | *Cod. Theod.* 14.13.1: August 4, 373 with Seeck, *Regesten*, 34; Pergami, *La legislazione*, 257<br>*Chron. Edess.* No. 31 with Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 257 | – Valens in Hierapolis<br>– Valens in Edessa |

[109] See n. 58.

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| winter | | |
| 373–374<br>374(?) | Amm. 30.1.1 *inter has turbarum difficultates* with 29.6.17 *Claudio regente urbem aeternam*; cf. Basil *Ep.* 214 with n. 73. | – Pap summoned to Tarsus; escapes back to Armenia |
| winter<br>374–375 | | |
| 375 | Them. *Or.* 13.163c; 166a; 168c; cf. Basil *Ep.* 213.2 | – Valens along Tigris and Euphrates<br>– Pap assassinated (Amm. 30.1.18–21) and replaced by Varazdat (*BP* 5.32–34)<br>– First Persian embassy: demands withdrawal from Armenia or Georgia; Valens rejects (Amm. 30.2.1–3) |
| winter<br>375–376 | Amm. 30.2.3: *hieme iam extrema* | – Second Persian embassy: calls for clarification of 363 treaty with original negotiators (§3) |
| 376 | Amm. 30.2.4: *principio sequentis anni* (i.e. 377) | – First Roman embassy by Victor and Urbicius: insists Šapur leave Armenia alone and allow troops to return to Georgia 'at the beginning of the next year'; legates receive two south Armenian principalities (§4–5) |
| winter<br>376–377 | Amm. 30.2.6: *mollita hieme* | – Third Persian embassy: Surena offers to grant two principalities; Valens rejects and promises war 'when the winter lets up' (§5–6) |
| 377 | *Cod. Theod.* 10.16.3: Jul. 6, 377; *Cod. Theod.* 7.6.3: August 9, 377 | – Valens in Hierapolis<br>– Second Roman embassy by Victor organizes hasty treaty (Amm. 31.7.1; cf. Eun. *fr.* 42; Zos. 4.21.1) |

| *Year* | *Chronological indicators* | *Events (27.12)* |
|---|---|---|
| | | – Valens withdraws Roman forces from Armenia and sends them to Thrace (Amm. 31.7.1) |
| | Amm. 31.7.1 *protinus egressurus* | – Valens attempts to depart Antioch for Thrace (Socr. *HE* 4.36.1) |
| | Amm. 30.2.7 *proinde* | – Šapur sends his Surena to take back Armenian principalities and prevent Roman protection of Sauromaces in Iberia |
| late 377—early 378 | | – Conduct of war against the Saracens concluding in peace settlement[110] |
| 378 | *Consul. Constant.* s.a. 378: May 30; cf. Socr. *HE* 4.38.1 | – Valens reaches Constantinople to take up the fight against the Goths |

[110] See n. 107.

# AMMIANUS ON THE REVOLT OF FIRMUS[1]

Jan Willem Drijvers

*Abstract*: This article presents a (re-)evaluation of Ammianus' account of the Firmus revolt and the revolt itself. It is argued that Ammianus' report leaves to be desired with respect to the completeness concerning geographical and chronological information. An explanation is given for the length of the account, which was also meant by Ammianus to evoke the Iugurthine war and the Tacfarinas revolt to connect his own work to the writings of Sallust and Tacitus. In his narrative of the suppression of the revolt Ammianus' critical innuendoes indicate that Theodosius the Elder was not a spotless heroic figure.

## I. *Introduction*

After the death of Julian and the short reign of Jovian the rule of the empire was taken over by Valentinian and Valens. Ammianus was not particularly impressed by the rule of these Pannonian emperors. Although he praised them, in particular Valentinian, for the way in which they conducted military affairs, they were not his sort of people. He thought them boorish, greedy and savagely cruel by nature, and their reigns rotten. They showed no self-control and did not restrain their powers as (good) rulers should do. The arrogance of the military increased to the detriment of the commonwealth under their rule. The emperors were lenient in punishing officials who abused their positions. But foremost amongst Ammianus' criticisms of Valentinian and Valens was the lack of justice from which their reigns suffered. Lawsuits were conducted unfairly, punishments were disproportionately harsh, people were convicted without having been given a trial and those who needed to be punished in the eyes of Ammianus could rely on the leniency of the emperors.[2]

[1] I would like to thank the participants at the Wassenaar workshop for their comments on an earlier version of this article. Special thanks are due to Jan den Boeft, Sigrid Mratschek, and to David Hunt, who was so kind as to correct my English.

[2] E.g. D.A. Pauw, *Karaktertekening by Ammianus Marcellinus* (Oegstgeest 1972; Diss. Leiden) 138–166; John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) *passim*.

Barbarian invasions and warfare characterized the reigns of Valentinian and Valens. There were troubles at the frontiers with Alamanni, Saxones, Quadi, Goths, Huns and Alans. There was a conflict with Persia over Armenia, and there were raids by Isaurians and troubles in Britain. Both emperors were also confronted with revolts and usurpations, among which that of Procopius in 365 was definitely the most serious. Another uprising took place in the 370s in Mauretania Caesariensis, the so-called Firmus revolt, named after its leader. Ammianus is the principal source for this rebellion against Roman authority. This article focuses on that revolt and on Ammianus' presentation of it.

## II. *Ammianus' account (29.5)*

The Firmus revolt occurred against the background of troubles in Africa since the middle of the 360s and the mismanagement of affairs and exploitation of the provinces by the *comes Africae* Romanus over which even *Iustitia* herself had wept.[3] According to Ammianus Firmus started his revolt out of fear that he would be condemned and executed because of the murder of his brother Zammac.[4] The latter had been secretly killed by Firmus after their father Nubel had died leaving both legitimate sons and offspring by concubines. Zammac had been favoured by Romanus, and his death induced the *comes Africae* to attack Firmus at court. Romanus who had many friends at the imperial court, in particular the *magister officiorum* Remigius, managed to conceal the arguments which Firmus brought forward in his defence. Apparently Firmus saw no other way to save his own skin than to revolt. The uprising was taken seriously and Valentinian sent Theodosius the Elder, *magister equitum* and one of his best generals, to Africa to deal with it. The greater part of Ammianus' account reports about Theodo-

[3] 28.6.1: *aerumnas, quas, ut arbitror, Iustitia quoque ipsa deflevit.*

[4] 29.5.3. Most editions have *condemnatus*. Only Clark (Berlin 1910–1915) has *indemnatus*, meaning that Firmus feared that he would be executed without a trial. Clark follows a conjecture by A. Kellerbauer, 'Kritische Kleinigkeiten', *Bayerische Blätter für das Gymnasial-Schulwesen* 9 (1873) 127–141, at 136–137: 'Firmus befürchtete weniger eine Verurteiling als vielmehr Meuchelmord ohne vorgängiges Urteil; ausserdem vgl. man 15, 2,5. 5, 15. 26,6,3.' The parallels in 15.2.5, 15.5.15 and 26.6.3 are decisive and *indemnatus* should be preferred over *condemnatus*.

sius' suppression of the revolt and the military encounters between the Roman troops and Firmus and his supporters. Theodosius' campaign can be divided into four main stages.[5]

1. After having taken some administrative measures, which in effect meant the suspension of the civil and military authorities, Theodosius linked his own forces with those stationed in the province and marched from Sitifis to Tubusuctu. He rejected an embassy sent by Firmus, took the *fundus Petrensis*, a stronghold once owned by Zammac, but taken by Firmus, and then proceeded to *Lamfoctense oppidum*. Christian priests came with hostages on behalf of Firmus and also Firmus presented himself to Theodosius begging for peace. As a demonstration of his good will Firmus furnished the Romans with provisions, left some relatives by way of hostages, and promised to return captives. He also restored the town of Icosium, military standards and a priestly crown. Theodosius went on to the cities of Tipasa and Caesarea. At Caesarea Theodosius learned that Firmus was not seriously seeking for peace but was still inciting rebellion (29.5.5–19).

2. The second phase is characterized by Theodosius' appearances at several strongholds and settlements (Gaionatis, Sugabar, Tigaviae, *Tingitanum castellum*), and an encounter with a coalition of tribes near the town of Adda which the Roman army luckily won. After Theodosius returned to Tipasa, where he made a long halt, he conducted negotiations with a number of Moorish tribes (29.5.20–33).

3. Firmus, seeing that Theodosius was getting the upper hand, fled to the *Caprarienses montes* in the south where he was able to strengthen his forces, among others with the help of the Ethiopians. Theodosius pursued Firmus and was able, but only with great effort, to defeat him. Firmus fled to the tribe of the Isaflenses. Theodosius invaded their lands and overcame them in battle. Firmus fled again, but his brother Mazuca was taken prisoner—he committed suicide—and the people of the Isaflenses were severely punished by Theodosius (29.5.34–43).

4. The final phase of the campaign took place in the north around the town of Auzia (*Audiense castellum*), where Theodosius returned after

[5] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 369–370.

having attempted to defeat the tribe of the Iubaleni, to which Firmus' father Nubel had belonged. Firmus had returned to the Isaflenses. Again fierce battles with this tribe were fought as well as one with the Iesalenses. King Igmazen of the Isaflenses, realizing that he could not win the conflict, betrayed his own people and took Firmus prisoner. Firmus committed suicide by hanging himself and his corpse was brought to the Roman camp on a camel; as a mark of humiliation it was then changed to a pack-animal and offered to Theodosius. The rebel had been defeated and Theodosius entered Sitifis in triumph (29.5.44–56).

Ammianus' account of the Firmus revolt and its suppression by Theodosius covers some eleven pages in Seyfarth's Teubner edition; it therefore holds a prominent place amongst the Western events during the reign of Valentinian in Ammianus' *Res Gestae*. The other main sources that refer to the uprising deal with it in a few sentences. Orosius relates that Firmus had stirred up the Moorish tribes, and had established himself as king; after having laid waste Africa and Mauretania and capturing Caesarea, Theodosius, sent by Valentinian, crushed the Moorish tribes and forced Firmus to take his own life.[6] According to Zosimus Valentinian was very oppressive in his demands for taxes by which he earned everyone's hatred as a consequence of which he became even more severe; the Africans, who could not bear the avarice of the commander in Mauretania, bestowed the purple on Firmus and declared him emperor.[7] The reference in the *Epitome* is still even shorter.[8] Also Augustine and the *Passio S. Salsae* refer to Firmus' uprising, but they do so in the context of the conflict between Donatists and Catholics (see below).[9] Not only do these accounts differ considerably with regard to length from that by Ammianus but also with regard to content.

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[6] Oros. *hist.* 7.33.5–6 (CSEL 5, 516–517): *Interea in Africae partibus Firmus sese excitatis Maurorum gentibus regem constituens Africam Mauretaniamque vastavit; Caesaream urbem nobilissimam Mauretaniae dolo captam, deinde caedibus incendiisque conpletam barbaris in praedam dedit. Igitur comes Theodosius, Theodosii qui post imperio praefuit pater, a Valentiniano missus effusas Maurorum gentes multis proeliis fregit, ipsum Firmum afflictum et oppressum coegit ad mortem.*

[7] Zos. 4.16.1–3: Διὰ ταῦτα καὶ Λίβυες, οὐκ ἐνεγκόντες τὴν Ῥωμανοῦ πλεονεξίαν τοῦ τὴν στρατιωτικὴν ἔχοντος ἐν Μαυρουσίοις ἀρχήν, Φίρμῳ τὴν ἁλουργίδα δόντες ἀνέδειξαν βασιλέα.

[8] *Epit.* 45.7: *Huius tempore Firmus apud Mauretaniam regnum invadens exstinguitur.* Other source references to Firmus' revolt: Symm. *Ep.* 1.64, *Rel.* 10.1; Claud. *Bello Gild.* 330–348.

[9] For the *Passio S. Salsae*, see *Cat. codd. hagiogr.* B.N. Paris 1, p. 351. For Augustine, see the references in n. 31 below.

The Firmus revolt has not gone unnoticed in the scholarly literature.[10] Themes discussed are the nature of the revolt, Firmus' motives, his goals, and his supporters. Furthermore the topographical and geographical background against which the revolt took place has received attention as well as the chronology of Theodosius' campaign, subjects on which Ammianus is disappointingly unclear.[11] Another recurring issue is the support the Donatists gave to the revolt. Also Firmus' background has been discussed. In all discussions of the Firmus revolt the account of Ammianus has been taken for granted and hardly ever been questioned.[12] One of the aims of this article is to explain why Ammianus presents such an elaborate account of a revolt which was regionally limited and not a serious threat to Valentinian's power. Another aim is to present an image of Theodosius founded on Ammianus' account.

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[10] E.g. P. Romanelli, *Storia delle province romane dell' Africa* (Rome 1959) 577–594; Jan Burian, 'Die einheimische Bevölkerung Nordafrikas in der Spätantike bis zur Einwanderung der Wandalen', in: Franz Altheim, Ruth Stiehl (eds.), *Die Araber in der alten Welt* 5.1 (Berlin 1968) 170–304, at 218–251; Alexander Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen unter Valentinian I', in: J.H. Diesner, H. Barth and H.D. Zimmermann (eds.), *Afrika und Rom in der Antike* (Halle 1968) 277–292, at 282–287; T. Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel, était-il usurpateur ou roi des Maures', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 18 (1970) 136–146; Alexander Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', *Hermes* 100 (1972) 81–113, at 94–103; Cl. Gebbia, 'Ancora sulle "rivolte" di Firmo e Gildone', in: A. Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa romana. Atti del V convegno di studio Sassari, 11–13 dicembre 1987* (Sassari 1988) 117–129; John F. Matthews, 'Mauretania in Ammianus and the Notitia', in: R. Goodburn, P. Bartholomew (eds.), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, BAR Suppl. Ser. 15 (Oxford 1976) 157–186; repr. in: Idem, *Political Life and Culture in Late Roman Society* (London 1985); Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 367–376; André Chastagnol, 'Firmus *latro* ou *princeps*?', in: *Mélanges T. Kotula*, Antiquitas 18 (Wroclaw 1993) 45–50; Andy Blackhurst, 'The House of Nubel: Rebels or Players?', in: A.H. Merrills (ed.), *Vandals, Romans and Berbers. New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa* (Aldershot 2004) 59–75, at 62–64. I had no access to M. Moreau, 'La guerre de Firmus (373–375)', *Revue d'histoire et de civilisation du Maghreb* 10 (1973) 21–36 and T. Kotula, 'Trois bouleversements: la révolte de Firmus, la révolte de Gildon, l'usurpation d'Heraclien et le problème de la crise politique de l'Afrique romaine', *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis* 449 (1979) 35–42.

[11] Matthews, 'Mauretania in Ammianus'; Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 103–110.

[12] Cf, however, Hagith S. Sivan, 'Why not Marry a Barbarian? Marital Frontiers in Late Antiquity (The Example of *CTh* 3.14.1)', in: Ralph W. Mathisen, Hagith S. Sivan (eds.), *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot 1996) 136–145, at 141–144. In this article Sivan discusses the context of *Cod. Theod.* 3.14.1 which prohibits the marriage between *provinciales* and *barbarae*. This law should be seen, according to Sivan, in the context of the troubles in Mauretania, and was issued on the recommendation of Theodosius with the intention to bolster his war efforts against Firmus.

## III. *Motives and support for the revolt*

Mauretania had often been the stage of unrest before. Moorish rebellions took place under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, and also in the middle and later third century serious outbreaks of unrest occurred.[13] These outbreaks demonstrate the danger which the Roman settlements in the lower regions of Mauretania had to fear from the non-romanized mountain tribes. The Firmus revolt must be seen against the background of troubles between the indigenous peoples in the African provinces and the Roman authorities. In the mid-360s the Mauretanian tribe of the Austoriani had rebelled and raided the country; the newly appointed *comes Africae* Romanus, who, if we can believe Ammianus, was foremost interested in enriching himself, dealt inadequately with this revolt to the detriment of the people of North Africa.[14] The troubles with the Austoriani lasted several years and were only suppressed in *c.* 370, i.e. around the time Firmus started his uprising.[15]

Firmus was one of the sons of Nubel, *regulus per nationes Mauricas potentissimus*, probably the primus inter pares amongst the chieftains of the various Moorish tribes; he himself belonged to the tribe of the Iubaleni (29.5.2, 44). Flavius Nubel was romanized to a large extent as well as a Christian, as appears from an inscription from Rasguniae. The inscription was set up in honour of Nubel's dedication of a basilica to house particles of the True Cross.[16] The text refers to Nubel as *praepositus* of the *equites armigeri iuniores*. From the names of his parents it may be concluded that Nubel was the son from a mixed marriage; his mother was probably called Collcial and his father, a *vir perfectissimus*

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[13] See in general Romanelli, *Storia delle province romane*, *passim*.

[14] 28.6; 26.4.5. Cf. B.H. Warmington, 'The Career of Romanus, Comes Africae', *ByzZ* 49 (1956) 55–64, at 55–60; Romanelli, *Storia delle province romane*, 565–577; Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen', 277–281. For a more favourable picture of Romanus, see Altay Coşkun, 'Der *Comes* Romanus, der Heermeister Theodosius und die drei letzten Akte der 'Lepcis-Magna-Affaire' (a. 373–377)', *AntTard* 12 (2004) 293–308; Coşkun doubts Ammianus' objectivity in his description of Romanus. See also Mratschek in this volume.

[15] Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen', 284.

[16] *ILCV* 1822 = *CIL* 8.9255. Cf. Jean-Pierre Laporte, 'Les armées romaines et la révolte de Firmus en Maurétanie césarienne', in: Yann Le Bohec, Catherine Wolff (eds.), *L'armée romaine de Dioclétien à Valentinien Ier*, *Actes du Congrès de Lyon (12–14 septembre 2002)* (Lyon 2004) 279–298, at 282 n. 25 and 289 who doubts that the Nubel mentioned in the inscription was Firmus' father; he dates the inscription to the beginning of the fifth century.

and former *comes*, Saturninus. Nubel was clearly part of the Roman system and he was a highly influential prince of the Moorish tribes. Through his power and influence within Moorish tribal society he was of great importance to the Romans for maintaining rest in the region. Nubel simultaneously belonged to two cultures: Roman and Moorish.[17] The names of Nubel's offspring reflect these two cultures; some sons have Roman names such as Firmus, but other sons have Moorish names (Zammac/Salmaces,[18] Gildo, Dius, Mazuca and Mascizel); of his daughters only the name of Cyria is known. Nubel's death was the occasion for troubles between his sons. Presumably Zammac had succeeded his father as *regulus*, which was unacceptable to Firmus. The conflict in which Zammac was murdered by Firmus seems to have been an internal Moorish affair, a tribal dispute about the inheritance of Nubel. Initially Firmus had no strong anti-Roman feelings. Like his father he was part of the Roman system, since there seems to have been a connection with Roman troops, the *equites quartae sagittariorum cohortis* and the *Constantianorum pedites*. He may have been an officer of these troops: it is noteworthy that they took his side in the rebellion.[19]

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[17] Brent D. Shaw, 'War and Violence', in: G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown and Oleg Grabar (eds.), *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, Mass./London 1999) 130–169, at 154–155; Blackhurst, 'The House of Nubel', 61–62; Laporte, 'Les armées romaines et la révolte de Firmus', 282.

[18] Salmaces (29.5.13) is the same person as Zammac as is obvious from *ILS* 9351; Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 95; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 373. Based on this inscription Seyfarth in his Teubner edition prints Zammac in 29.5.13 although there is no support for that in the manuscripts. The inscription shows Zammac's sympathy for the Romans; he calls himself defender of the *res romana* and he speaks of his *Romuleis triumfis*: 'With prudence he [i.e. Zammac] establishes a stronghold of eternal peace, and with faith he guards everywhere the Roman state, making strong the mountain by the river with fortifications, and this stronghold he calls by the name of Petra. At last the tribes of the region, eager to put down war, have joined as your allies, Sammac, so that strength united with faith in all duties shall always be joined to Romulus' triumphs.'; tr. M. Brett, E. Fentress, *The Berbers* (Oxford 1996) 72. Cf. Denis Lengrand, 'L'inscription de Petra et la révolte de Firmus', *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques*, Série B, Afrique du Nord 23 (1990–1992) 159–170; Laporte, 'Les armées romaines et la révolte de Firmus', 280–281.

[19] 29.5.20. The mounted archers were auxiliaries; *Not. Dign. Occ.* 6.72. The *Constantiniani pedites* probably belonged to the legions *comitatenses* of *I Flavia Victrix Constantina* (*Not. Dign. Occ.* 5.252) or *II Flavia Constantiniana* (*Not. Dign. Occ.* 5.253); these troops, whose origin goes back to Constantine I, were levied in the region. On these troops, see R. Scharf, '*Constantiniaci* = *Constantiniani*? Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik der Notitia Dignitatum am Beispiel der "constantinischen" Truppen', *Tyche* 12 (1997) 189–212, at 195–196, 203f.; cf. C. Zuckerman, '*Constantiniani–Constantiniaci* from Pylai. A Rejoinder', *Tyche* 13 (1998) 255–258. Burian, 'Die einheimische Bevölkerung Nordafrikas', 220, following

Firmus' feelings for the Romans would soon change. Were it not for Romanus' support of Zammac,[20] his extreme zeal to revenge Zammac's death and his machinations at court through his friend Remigius to prevent Firmus from presenting his case, the conflict would perhaps not have got out of hand.[21] However, the originally internal Moorish and family conflict about Nubel's political inheritance and succession soon gained wider proportions and eventually led to Firmus' rebellion against the Romans.[22]

The backing Firmus received in Mauretania was large. Numerous Moorish tribes and their leaders supported him.[23] Ammianus mentions the Aethiopians[24] as supporters and although Ammianus does not explicitly say so, presumably also the Iubaleni were on Firmus' side. Even some Roman army units sustained Firmus' revolt. Ammianus also speaks of Roman deserters from Theodosius' army who went over to Firmus' camp (29.5.22, 31, 39), of Roman soldiers who were not willing to fight against Firmus (29.5.24, 49), and of people in towns and cities which supported Firmus.

From Ammianus' description of the revolt one could gain the impression that Firmus' motive to rebel was personal. That may be the case for Firmus, but it does not explain why he received such large support from the indigenous tribes. An explanation for this wide support may be the oppressive tax demands by Valentinian and the avarice of the commander in Africa, Romanus, referred to by Zosimus.[25] Ammianus mentions something similar in his obituary of Valentinian when he says that Firmus was unable to endure the greed and arrogance of the military officials (30.7.10). It seems that dissatisfaction with Roman

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O. Seeck, 'Firmus', *RE* 12 (1909) 2383–2384, at 2383, calls Firmus *dux Mauretaniae* but there is no evidence that he bore that title.

[20] Ammianus (29.5.2) calls Zammac *comiti nomine Romano acceptus*.

[21] Alexander Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild im Werk Ammians* (Bonn 1965) 92: 'Firmus…ist ein klares Opfer der verderbten Hofkamarilla.'

[22] Ammianus (29.5.3) uses the expression *ab imperii dicione descivit.*

[23] Ammianus mentions the Tyndenses, Masinissenses, Mazices, Musones, Baiurae, Cantauriani, Avastomates, Cafaves, Bavares, Isaflenses, and Iesalenses. These tribes differed in civilization and language (29.5.28). Of the leaders who supported Firmus, Ammianus names Belles, Fericius, Suggen, and Igmazen. Some also remained neutral, like Masilla, who functioned as an intermediary between Theodosius and Igmazen and who also had contacts with Firmus (29.5.51–54).

[24] Probably a generic name for peoples living on the African desert fringes; Romanelli, *Storia delle province romane*, 591.

[25] See note 7.

provincial government, the heavy tax demands in combination with the greediness of Roman officials, were the main reasons why Firmus was able to gather such large backing.

Firmus also found support amongst his own relatives: his brothers Mascizel and Dius, leaders of the Tyndenses and Masinissenses, and his sister Cyria had joined the revolt.[26] One of his other brothers, Gildo—the later *comes Africae* and leader of the revolt of 397/8—, belonged to Theodosius' staff and helped suppress the uprising. This division among Nubel's offspring reveals the thin line which existed between Roman and 'barbarian'. In a sense the revolt, which started as a fraternal conflict, remained a family affair.[27] Private money, to pay the troops, was used by Firmus; also his sister Cyria employed her private wealth for this purpose (29.5.28, 34, 36).

In his account of the revolt Ammianus refers once to Christianity. He mentions priests who were sent by Firmus to Theodosius to ask for peace.[28] These priests have been identified by some as Donatists.[29] A connection between Firmus and the Donatist Church has been much debated in the scholarly literature, and it has been supposed by some scholars, in particular by W.H.C. Frend, that Firmus was strongly supported by the Donatists.[30] Their arguments are based on passages in letters by Augustine. Firmus may have persecuted the Rogatists, a sect within the Donatist Church, on behalf of the Donatists, which earned the latter the nickname *Firmiani* by the Rogatists.[31] Furthermore, the

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[26] 29.5.11, 13, 28. Guy Sabbah, 'Présences féminines dans l'*Histoire* d'Ammien Marcellin. Les rôles politiques', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 91–105, at 94.

[27] Interestingly, twenty-five years later Gildo found his brother Mascizel against him when he revolted from Roman rule and Mascizel fought on behalf of the Romans.

[28] 29.5.15: *Firmus…Christiani ritus antistites oraturos pacem…misit.*

[29] W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church. A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford 1971$^2$) 73, 198.

[30] See also Z. Rubin, 'Mass Movements in Late Antiquity: Appearances and Realities', in: I. Malkin, Z.W. Rubinsohn (eds.), *Leaders and Masses in the Ancient World* (Leiden 1995) 129–187, at 169–170 and M.A. Tilley, *The Bible in North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis 1997) 94, who calls Firmus the head of a 'Mauretanian-Circumcellion-Donatist alliance'.

[31] August. *Contra Epist. Parmeniani* 1.10.16, 11.17 (CSEL 51, 38, 39); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.83.184 (CSEL 52, 113); *Ep.* 87.10 (CSEL 34, 406). The Rogatists are named after Rogatus, bishop of Cartenna in Mauretania. He decided to break away from the main body of the Donatist Church because of the orgies and violence of the Circumcellions; Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 197.

Donatists may have seen in Firmus a legitimate emperor.[32] Another text passage often cited in favour of the collaboration between Firmus and the Donatists is Augustine's reference to the capture of the city of Rusicade with the help of its Donatist bishop who had opened the city gates.[33] Moreover, in Romanus Firmus and the Donatists seem to have had a common enemy; he is said to have persecuted the Donatists.[34] However, there is only slight evidence for broad support by the Donatists for Firmus' efforts to dissociate Mauretania from Roman authority. Augustine only refers to incidents, and it is questionable whether the nickname *Firmiani* given to the Donatists by their adversaries is good evidence for a strong alliance between the Donatist Church and Firmus. Also Augustine's wording *in legitimis potestatibus* need not imply that the Donatists considered Firmus a legitimate emperor. Apart from that it may be assumed that Augustine and the *Passio* S. Salsae (see above p. 132) deliberately over-emphasized the Donatists' role. The Donatist Church was probably too much part of Roman civilization and culture to ally itself unconditionally with Firmus.[35] Consequently some have completely denied Donatist involvement.[36] However, it is hardly possible to reason away the information, despite its rhetorical exaggeration, provided by Augustine and other Christian sources. It may well be that both parties saw advantage in a tactical alliance provided by the occasion, but it is likely that the partnership was of a rather loose nature and that the Donatists did not contribute significantly to Firmus' rebellion.[37]

We cannot be certain whether the priests mentioned by Ammianus were of Donatist conviction; there is no evidence whatsoever to conclude that they were. They were sent by Firmus as intermediaries to explore the possibility of peace between himself and Theodosius. They were treated courteously by Theodosius and their mission was successful since Firmus met with Theodosius shortly afterwards. That Firmus

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[32] August. *Contra Epist. Parmeniani* 1.11.17 (CSEL 51, 39): *Firmum barbarum…licet hostem immanissimum Romanorum in legitimis potestatibus numerent.*

[33] August. *Ep.* 87.10 (CSEL 34, 406).

[34] Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 197.

[35] Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 145.

[36] Emin Tengström, *Donatisten und Katholiken. Soziale, wirtschaftliche und politische Aspekte einer nordafrikanischen Kirchenspaltung* (Gothenburg 1964) 79–83.

[37] Burian, 'Die einheimische Bevölkerung Nordafrikas', 245; Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 145; Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen', 283; Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 96; Matthews, 'Mauretania in Ammianus', 178; Stephan Elbern, *Usurpationen im spätrömischen Reich* (Bonn 1984) 70.

sent priests for this purpose is not surprising. Firmus himself was probably of Christian conviction and in the fourth century Christian priests were increasingly employed as negotiators and envoys.[38]

## IV. *Firmus, a usurper?*

The *Historia Augusta* portrays the life of a usurper who revolted in Egypt in the time of Aurelian.[39] He is said to be of Syrian origin and to have had connections with the Palmyrene queen Zenobia. His name was Firmus. The supposed author of the life, a certain Vopiscus, describes a discussion which took place between himself and some of his friends on the one hand and a Marcus Fonteius on the other. The latter asserted that Firmus was not an emperor but merely a brigand (*latrunculus*), whereas Vopiscus and his friends were of the opinion that Firmus had worn the purple and called himself Augustus on his coins and in his edicts.[40] This discussion is fictional as is the life of Firmus itself. The *vita* is likely to have been composed at the end of the fourth century and was probably modelled after the Moorish Firmus.[41] Even though the Moorish Firmus did not strike coins and issue edicts (as far as we know), the discussion may very well reflect actual debates how to characterize the Firmus revolt. Was Firmus a brigand or a usurper?

In much modern literature the Firmus revolt is generally designated as usurpation, meaning that Firmus would have directly challenged imperial authority in order to replace Valentinian or to have sought recognition as emperor besides Valentinian and Valens.[42] How-

[38] Amm. 20.7.7, 31.12.8; John F. Matthews, 'Gesandschaft', *RAC* 10 (1978) 653–685, at 673–674.

[39] HA, *Quadr. tyr.* 1–6.

[40] HA, *Quadr. tyr.* 2.1–3.

[41] Chastagnol, 'Firmus *latro* ou *princeps*?'; François Paschoud, 'Le tyran fantasmé: variations de l'*Histoire Auguste* sur le thème de l'usurpation', in: François Paschoud, Joachim Szidat (eds.), *Usurpationen in der Spätantike* (Stuttgart 1997) 87–98; Gabriele Marasco, 'Un lapsus nella Historia Augusta e la biografia di Firmo', *RhM* 140 (1997) 400–411.

[42] E.g. Seeck, 'Firmus', 2383; Elbern, *Usurpationen im spätrömischen Reich*, 26, 39; Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen', 283; Alexander Demandt, *Die Spätantike. Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284–565 n. Chr.*, HdAW III.6 (Munich 1989) 113–114; John Curran, 'From Jovian to Theodosius', in: Averil Cameron, Peter Garnsey (eds.), *CAH* 13 (Cambridge 1998) 78–110, at 88 ('Firmus rebelled, taking the title of Augustus'). Dietmar Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie* (Darmstadt 1996[2]) 329 presents him as 'Gegenkaiser'. See, for instance, Egon Flaig, 'Für einen

ever, this view has also been disputed.[43] The difference of opinions is understandable considering the ways in which Firmus and his rebellion are described in the primary sources. Only two of them speak of outright usurpation. The *Passio S. Salsae* reports that Firmus intended to take over imperial authority, and according to Zosimus the Africans bestowed the purple on Firmus and declared him emperor.[44] Most other writings designate Firmus as a *rex* of the Moorish tribes. Orosius calls him *rex Maurorum* and Augustine *rex barbarus Firmus*. Although the meaning of the words *Firmus apud Mauretaniam regnum invadens exstinguitur* by the author of the *Epitome* is not entirely clear, it does not indicate usurpation. Unfortunately, Ammianus is not clear either. He never calls Firmus *tyrannus* or *princeps* but refers to him as *perduellis*, *rebellis* and *latro* (*funereus*).[45] Moreover, Ammianus nowhere explicitly mentions that Firmus intended to take over imperial power. He makes, however, some implicit references. At the beginning of his account he mentions that Firmus revolted from the rule of the empire (29.5.3: *ab imperii dicione descivit*). Almost halfway he refers to a tribune of the *Constantiniani pedites* who had placed his neck-chain, in place of a diadem, on Firmus' head (29.5.20: *…tribunis, e quibus unus torquem pro diademate capiti imposuit Firmi*), and near the conclusion of the account he mentions that at the end of a battle Firmus was seen mounted on a tall horse, his purple cloak trailing out and spreading wide (29.5.48: *visus est Firmus equo celsiori insidens sago puniceo perrectius panso*). How to interpret these passing references? In view of Zosimus and the *Passio S. Salsae* Ammianus' remarks may refer to usurpation. That argument may be strengthened by the remarkable similarity between 29.5.20 and the description of Julian's proclamation as Augustus in 20.4.17–18[46] and by the fact that Ammianus designates

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Konzeptionalisierung der Usurpation im Spätrömischen Reich', in: François Paschoud, Joachim Szidat (eds.), *Usurpationen in der Spätantike* (Stuttgart 1997) 15–34, on the concept of usurpation in Late Antiquity. An inscription from Camala (*CIL* 5338) is sometimes thought to refer to Firmus; however, the unnamed Augustus therein denotes Julian the Apostate and not Firmus; Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 140; Blackhurst, 'The House of Nubel', 63.

[43] For instance Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 144–146; Burian, 'Die einheimische Bevölkerung Nordafrikas', 237–238; Gebbia, 'Ancora sulle 'rivolte' di Firmo e Gildone', 124.

[44] *Pass. S. Salsae* 13: *vellet…sibi imperii dominatum contra ius fasque degener vindicare gentilis*. Zos. 4.16.3: καὶ Λίβυες…Φίρμῳ τὴν ἁλουργίδα δόντες ἀνέδειξαν βασιλέα.

[45] *Perduellis*: 29.5.36, 52, 55; *rebellis*: 29.5.20; *latro*: 29.5.46.

[46] 29.5.20: [Theodosius]…*Constantianorum peditum partem Tigavias venire iusserat cum tribunis, e quibus unus* ***torquem pro diademate capiti imposuit Firmi***; 20.4.17–18: *Augustus renuntiatus* [Iulianus] *iubebatur* ***diadema*** *proferre…Maurus nomine quidam, postea*

not only Firmus as a *rebellis* but also Julian and Procopius.[47] However, the *Passio* is clearly anti-Firmus and intends to depict the rebel as a great threat to Roman authority. Augustine also presents Firmus in an unfavourable way, but he only designates him as *rex*. Also Ammianus' characterization of Firmus as *perduellis* could indicate usurpation; the same term is used by Ammianus to denote the usurpers Silvanus, Julian, and Procopius.[48] On the other hand, most sources do not speak of usurpation. Symmachus, who became *proconsul Africae* in 373, calls the revolt a *rebellio barbarica*.[49] And that is what it probably was. Support for this view may be found in the account of Ammianus; he frequently calls the Moorish rebels *barbari*[50] and he presents Theodosius' intervention as a campaign of Rome against Moorish barbarian tribes. Firmus is called a *latro* (29.5.46), a term Ammianus often uses for designating rebellious barbarians.[51] Moreover, there is no indication in Ammianus' report that Firmus had the backing of a considerable part of the Roman military stationed in Mauretania, as Julian and Procopius had when they usurped power. Apart from a handful of soldiers—possibly of Moorish origin—from the *equites quartae sagittariorum cohortis*, the *Constantianorum pedites* as well as a few deserters, the Roman legions remained loyal to Valentinian.[52] Furthermore, the rising remained limited to a relatively small region, Mauretania Caesariensis, and did not spread.

Scholars have attempted to interpret and to label this *rebellio barbarica*. It has been called a rebellion of 'a nationalist character',[53] a Donatist

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*comes…abstractum sibi* ***torquem…capiti Iuliani imposuit*** *confidenter*. Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 141 already noticed this similarity. For the coronation by a *torques*, see W. Ensslin, 'Zur Torqueskrönung und Schilderhebung bei der Kaiserwahl', *Klio* 35 (1942) 268–298, esp. 283–284 on Firmus.

47 29.5.20; 21.13.16; 26.9.10. *Rebellis* is a general term to characterize insurgents: 14.7.14; 14.10.14; 15.8.6; 18.2.15; 19.11.15; 26.7.5; 29.6.15. Ammianus uses the term *usurpator* only in one case: to designate Procopius (26.7.12).

48 Silvanus: 15.5.19; Julian: 20.8.21, 22.14.4; Procopius: 26.5.11, 7.13, 8.1. See J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XX* (Groningen 1987) 218.

49 Symm. *Ep.* 1.64.

50 29.5.12, 18, 30, 37, 41, 47, 50, 51.

51 14.2.8, 20; 16.2.6; 22.16.23; 23.6.2; 24.2.4; 27.9.7; 28.5.7; 30.6.2.

52 Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 139 points out that fourth-century usurpers were all high military officials or otherwise men distinguished in the imperial hierarchy. Compared to them Firmus was only of modest stature, and was not likely to get any support other than from his own people.

53 B.H. Warmington, *The North African Provinces from Diocletian to the Vandal Conquest* (Cambridge 1954) 11.

rising,[54] a class struggle between the rural non-Romanized Moorish tribes (*plebs rusticana*) and the urban Romanized *possessores* aimed at 'Besitzneuverteilung',[55] and 'an ethnic uprising fuelled by dynastic rivalries'.[56] It has also been seen in the historical perspective of the aspirations of the 'eternel Jugurtha'[57] and the Moorish attempts to achieve independence from Roman rule and to become autonomous.[58]

However, it seems that in the early stages of the rebellion Firmus had no political programme. He began his uprising for personal reasons, probably spontaneously and not well-prepared. However, the revolt soon became successful because of the oppressive rule of the Romans from which the peoples in Mauretania greatly suffered. Before long many Moorish tribes and the Moorish nobility were gathered behind Firmus. Presumably in its first phases the revolt consisted mainly of raids on the Romanized urban centres in Mauretania, and the plundering and devastation of these marks of Roman rule. It may be that at some time during the revolt Firmus was presented with a sort of diadem and was wearing a purple cloak, but from the way in which Ammianus refers to these imperial attributes in passing it is unlikely that Firmus had the intention of usurping imperial power. However, gradually Firmus may have conceived the idea of separating Mauretania from Roman authority and of becoming himself *rex Maurorum*. Ammianus' words *ab imperii dicione descivit* support such an explanation. Moreover, Gildo's rebellion twenty-five years later was also aimed at autonomy for the Moorish peoples.[59] Firmus' *rebellio barbarica* can therefore best be seen as a separatist uprising of indigenous peoples dissatisfied with Roman rule.

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[54] Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 72.

[55] H.-J. Diesner, *Der Untergang der römischen Herrschaft in Nordafrika* (Weimar 1964) 96; E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 129–130.

[56] Rubin, 'Mass Movements in Late Antiquity', 168.

[57] Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 146.

[58] Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 98.

[59] Burian, 'Die einheimische Bevölkerung Nordafrikas', 254; Gebbia, 'Ancora sulle 'rivolte' di Firmo e Gildone', 124–129.

## V. *Evaluation of Ammianus' account*

Few scholars have questioned the basic trustworthiness of Ammianus' account of the Firmus revolt and its suppression by Theodosius.[60] Its length and apparent interest in completeness as well as eye for details, have undoubtedly led to great trust in Ammianus' report, especially since the other sources on the event are so concise. Much scholarly literature about the Firmus revolt often does not go beyond retelling Ammianus' account. However, there are several aspects of the report which deserve closer attention, such as the lack of clarity about geography/topography and chronology, the length of the account and Ammianus' source for it, as well as the role of Theodosius.[61]

### 1. *Geography and Topography*

Ammianus is disappointingly unclear about the geographical scope of the Firmus revolt and Theodosius' expedition. He mentions a variety of towns/cities as well as strongholds and regions, but he does not indicate where they are situated in relation to each other, nor does he give any information about distances either in miles or in day's marches. In itself that is strange since he usually gives this sort of information and even thinks it important for a better understanding of the historical and military events he is reporting. Neither does Ammianus provide information as to where the various tribes which supported Firmus and which had to be subdued by Theodosius were located. In Ammianus' defence it could be argued that geography was not his strong point. He is, for instance, indistinct about the exact route which the Roman army followed when it retreated from Persia and even though his work abounds in geographical digressions, one cannot help thinking that Ammianus did not always know what he was writing about.[62]

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[60] Cf. Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 94: Ammianus' account is 'allzuviel Vertrauen entgegengebracht worden'. Sivan, 'Why not Marry a Barbarian?', 141 considers Ammianus' report 'one-sided and misleading'.

[61] Theodosius' campaign, or at least Ammianus' account of it, is also unclear from a strategical point of view; Gary A. Crump, *Ammianus Marcellinus as a Military Historian*, Historia Einzelschriften 27 (Wiesbaden 1975) 131.

[62] See, for instance, the commentary on the geographical digressions in books 22 (Black Sea, Egypt) and 23 (Persia); Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen 1995) 88–147, 253–312; *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII* (Groningen 1998) 129–233.

Several explanations may be given for Ammianus' lack of geographical clarity. The main reason may be that he thought it superfluous to mention geographical and topographical details, in particular because he seems to have dealt comprehensively with the geography of Africa in a lost book, as he mentions himself.[63] Another explanation may be that geographical information was lacking in the source or sources which he used and that he somehow did not complement that information with geographical data from other sources. It may also be that he did not want to burden his audience with information that did not relate to the actual subduing of the revolt.

It would, however, have been extremely helpful for Ammianus' (modern) readers, for a better understanding of the revolt and its suppression, to have been provided with some geographical knowledge. They would then perhaps have known that Mauretania was a mountainous area, with fortified landed estates (*centenaria*, *castella*, *fundi*, *oppida*) situated in its valleys, and the main cities at the Mediterranean seaboard.[64] The landed estates were often the property of Moorish leaders,[65] most of whom were supporting Firmus. Capturing and controlling these estates was therefore of crucial importance for Theodosius in order to subdue the uprising.[66] The Mauretanian mountains were beyond Roman control and it was close to the mountains, in particular the *Caprarienses montes* in the south, that Theodosius encountered most resistance and barely escaped defeat.

## 2. *Chronology*

Ammianus is very unclear about the chronology of the revolt. He does not indicate when it started, when it ended, or how long it took for Theodosius to crush the uprising and to re-establish Roman authority

[63] 29.5.18: *Caesaream…cuius itidem originem in Africae situ digessimus plene.*

[64] See in particular Matthews, 'Mauretania in Ammianus'; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 367–376; also C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire. A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore/London 1994) 149–151.

[65] Firmus' father Nubel owned a *castellum* near Rasguniae (*CIL* 8.9255) and his brother Zammac owned the *fundus Petrensis* (Amm. 29.5.13; *ILS* 9351). The *fundus Mazucanus*, mentioned in Amm. 29.5.32, probably belonged to Mazuca, another brother of Firmus.

[66] Frontier society was organized around fortified farmsteads. Occupation by pro-Roman Moorish leaders of these estates was important for preserving Roman authority in the region. For instance *ILS* 9351; see note 23 above and Blackhurst, 'The House of Nubel', 64–65.

in Mauretania. In his whole account Ammianus only gives one chronological indication: in the month of February Theodosius returned to Tipasa after a battle with a coalition of tribes near the town of Adda.[67] However, no clue as to a year is given. In general Ammianus is not generous with providing chronological information, even of events in which he himself was involved, such as the retreat of the Roman army after the failure of Julian's Persian expedition. Besides, he has an inclination to compress time. For instance, from his description of the rebellion of the Austoriani (28.6) a reader would never gather that this affair lasted some six years.[68]

Ammianus' omission of a chronology of the Firmus revolt has resulted in a variety of dates in the scholarly literature. In particular opinions differ about the beginning of the rebellion—the years 370 and 372 are mentioned most—, but there are also various ideas about the dating of Theodosius' campaign. In general the rebellion is dated in the years 372–375.[69] However, it is likely that Firmus started his uprising before 372, possibly even in 370.[70] Although Ammianus mentions that Valentinian sent Theodosius to deal with the affair before Firmus should increase in strength (29.5.4), one may presume that the emperor sent one of his best generals only when the revolt was considered a serious threat to Roman authority. The rebellion must therefore have been well under way and Firmus must have already gathered considerable support. Unfortunately, Ammianus' text has a serious lacuna between the announcement of Firmus' revolt from Roman authority and the start of Theodosius' intervention, so that we are not well informed about the initial phase of the uprising. But it is clear that Firmus had captured various cities—Caesarea, Icosium, Tipasa[71]—and that he had

[67] 29.5.31: *Tipasam mense Februario venit.*

[68] Warmington, 'The Career of Romanus', 59.

[69] E.g. Burian, 'Die einheimische Bevölkerung Nordafrikas', 222; Kotula, 'Firmus, fils de Nubel', 138; Gebbia, 'Ancora sulle 'rivolte' di Firmo e Gildone', 118; Chastagnol, 'Firmus *latro* ou *princeps*?', 45; Coşkun, 'Der *Comes* Romanus', 4. The chronological table of *CAH* 13, 762 is a strange exception; it dates the revolt in 370–371; however, Curran, 'From Jovian to Theodosius', 88 in the same *CAH* has 372 as the date of the beginning of Firmus' revolt.

[70] Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen', 284.

[71] Caesarea: Amm. 29.5.42; Oros. *hist.* 7.33.5, Symm. *Ep.* 1.64. Icosium: Amm. 29.5.16. Tipasa: *Pass. S. Salsae* 13. Possibly he also took Tigava, but he probably did not capture Rusicade and Calama, cities situated considerably more to the east, as sometimes suggested; Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 101–102.

been able to seize military standards, which implied Roman defeat, before Theodosius arrived in Africa.[72]

The chronology of Theodosius' campaigns in Mauretania has been carefully looked into only by Alexander Demandt and his reconstruction, predominantly on the basis of legislation, has hardly been contested.[73] Theodosius arrived in Africa early in 373, possibly in April, when Firmus' revolt had been already going on for a considerable time.[74] Not long after his arrival, Theodosius ordered Romanus to be arrested for reasons which are not entirely clear, but presumably had to do with his style of government and his inability to crush Firmus.[75] It took Theodosius some two years to suppress the revolt and it was only in 375, when exactly is not clear, that Theodosius could triumphantly enter Sitifis. We can only roughly date the various phases of Theodosius' campaign. The first and second phase are likely to be dated between March/April 373 and February 374 (arrival at Tipasa). The third phase began with a long halt in Tipasa and diplomatic attempts to persuade tribal leaders to abandon Firmus; these may have taken several months and campaigning may have started again only in the summer months of 374 with an expedition to the *Caprarienses montes*, where Firmus had gathered a substantial army. This third period lasted most of the rest of the year. The fourth and last phase is probably to be dated in 375. It is hard to say when exactly the revolt was finally suppressed by the suicide of Firmus, but probably several months before the death of Valentinian (17 November 375).

### 3. *Length of account*

Ammianus' report is of considerable length and would have been even longer were it not for seven lacunae, some of them of several lines. Why does Ammianus devote such a large space to Theodosius' expedition against Firmus?

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[72] Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 100 suggests that Valentinian initially relied on Romanus to deal with Firmus, that Romanus presented the situation more optimistically than it in reality was and that it therefore took several years before Valentinian intervened by sending Theodosius.

[73] Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', 103–111.

[74] According to Coşkun, 'Der *Comes* Romanus', 4 Theodosius only arrived in Mauretania in the middle of 373.

[75] Cf. Coşkun, 'Der *Comes* Romanus', 6–7.

It is generally accepted that Ammianus' account is derived from an official report of the suppression of the uprising either written by Theodosius himself or issued by the court on the basis of a report by Theodosius.[76] The account is rather precise and formal, as for instance in the mentioning of various places, proper names, and tribes and their leaders. Also Ammianus' references to army units and persons punished by Theodosius betray the use of an official report. Whether it was written by Theodosius or not, the author is most likely to have been a military man. The report is focused on warfare—which must have appealed to the military historian Ammianus—and Theodosius' unrelenting efforts to crush Firmus in military encounters.[77] Technical military terms—*agmen quadratum*, *acies rotundo habitu formata*, *testudinis forma* (29.5.39, 41, 48)—, the numbers of soldiers on both the Roman and Mauretanian side which are occasionally (explicitly and implicitly) given (29.5.29, 34, 47, 48), and the incidental references to the circumstances of the terrain[78] also clearly indicate the use of a military document. Ammianus' account is scrupulous, apart from geographical and chronological information, but clearly lacks vividness due probably to lack of personal involvement.[79] Moreover, it contains a few inconsistencies and unclarities. Ammianus was clearly not aware of the fact that Zammac and Salmaces were one and the same person.[80] He furthermore fails to explain why Romanus was first to take charge of frontier defences and only shortly later was arrested, although presumably Theodosius needed Romanus' help because his own troops had not arrived yet from Gaul.[81] Not surprisingly, the account is written from a Roman perspective.

The Firmus revolt remained geographically limited and seems never to have been a real threat to the reign of Valentinian. It was just one of the problems on the outskirts of the empire which the emperor had to deal with. Several explanations can be put forward as to why Ammianus gave such a lengthy account of the Firmus revolt. As a

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[76] Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris 1978) 206–207, 238; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 381.

[77] Ammianus mentions six battles: 29.5.12, 14, 25–26, 38–39, 41, 48.

[78] The mountainous regions of Mauretania were clearly inaccessible and dangerous for the Roman troops (29.5.34, 44).

[79] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 207.

[80] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 373 and 381 ascribes this mistake to the use of different layers of information.

[81] 29.5.5, 7. Cf. Coşkun, 'Der *Comes* Romanus', 7–8, 12.

military historian he was particularly interested in presenting events in which the military was involved; this certainly applies to this revolt. In addition it may be that the existence of a good source also induced Ammianus to deal elaborately with the event. This may perhaps make clear why he only dealt in a succinct way with Theodosius' suppression of the troubles in Britain (27.8); no good report of that campaign may have been accessible.[82] Perhaps more important was Ammianus' desire to create a balance in his description of Eastern and Western events. In book 26 he had presented an extensive narrative of the usurpation by Procopius which had posed a serious menace to the reign of Valens.[83] The Firmus revolt was the only rebellion in the West which came close to Procopius' attempt to take over imperial power. Ammianus may have treated the rebellion so elaborately for the sake of achieving equilibrium in his work. However, his foremost reason may have been to affiliate with his predecessors Sallust and Tacitus.

As has been argued often before, the *Res Gestae* belongs to a tradition of history writing. Ammianus took Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Sallust, Livy, Tacitus and others as his examples and he likes to allude to them or to evoke their writings.[84] He seems especially to have had a deep familiarity with Latin historiographical tradition as his imitation by context and language of texts by Sallust, Livy and Tacitus shows.[85] Sallust is even mentioned by name as one of the sources for his digression on Gaul (15.12.6)—the other two are not, but it is evident that he knew their works. Ammianus was familiar with Sallust's *Historiae*, *Bellum Catilinae* and *Bellum Iugurthinum*. It is the latter work which Ammianus evoked in his account of the Firmus revolt.[86] There

[82] Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 90; cf. Sabbah, *La méthode*, 172–173.

[83] 26.5.8–26.9. For the most recent discussion of the Procopius revolt, see Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002) 68–115.

[84] Timothy D. Barnes, 'Literary Convention, Nostalgia and Reality in Ammianus Marcellinus', in: Graeme Clarke et al. (eds.), *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Rushcutters Bay 1990) 59–92, at 66–72.

[85] C.W. Fornara, 'Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus, II: Ammianus' Knowledge and Use of Greek and Latin Literature', *Historia* 41 (1992) 420–438, gives many examples and references to earlier literature on the subject. According to Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 195 Ammianus, in spite of the fundamental Greekness of his work (pp. 65–78), 'thought of himself as a historian who continued, imitated and emulated Tacitus'.

[86] Robin Seager, 'Ammianus, Theodosius and Sallust's *Jugurtha*', *Histos* 1997 (http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1997/seager.html) had already noticed the many parallels between Sallust and Ammianus.

are some remarkable resemblances between the two texts: the avarice and corruptibility of the Romans, the desertion of Roman soldiers to the opponent's side, and the Roman military strategy—capturing of cities and strongholds and confronting the enemy in open battle. The parallels between Iugurtha and Firmus are striking. Both are of similar descent: Iugurtha being the son of a concubine of Micipsa and Firmus having brothers by concubines of his father.[87] Both rebels had done military service in the Roman army. Both exploit the terrain: Iugurtha by retreating to country fortified by nature, to the deserted and difficult regions, Firmus by going to inhospitable—for Roman soldiers impassable—mountain regions.[88] An interesting analogy is also that both men were driven by fear and desperation but also demonstrated courage.[89] They also showed humility toward the Romans and sent envoys to come to an understanding.[90] Both Iugurtha and Firmus attempted to shake the loyalty of the Roman troops: Iugurtha by shouting at the Roman soldiers that they were fighting for nothing, as a consequence of which many soldiers became terrified and were on the verge of fleeing; Firmus did the same by urging the Roman soldiers to leave Theodosius.[91] Remarkable also is the resemblance between the Mauretanian king Bocchus and the Mauretanian chieftain Igmazen. Both were supporters of respectively Iugurtha and Firmus, but betrayed them and handed them—the one alive, the other dead—over to the Romans.[92]

In his *Annals* Tacitus included a narrative of the conflict between the Romans and the Numidian Tacfarinas.[93] Tacfarinas had rebelled against Roman rule during the reign of Tiberius and kept the Romans occupied with raids and guerrilla warfare for some seven years (17–24AD). The analogies between Firmus and Tacfarinas are perhaps even more obvious than those between Firmus and Iugurtha. Like Firmus Tacfarinas had served in the Roman army and like Firmus

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[87] *Iug.* 5.7; Amm. 29.5.2.

[88] *Iug.* 54.3, 80.1, 87.4; Amm. 29.5.33, 34.

[89] Fear: *Iug.* 11.8, 13.5, 25.6, 36.2, 62.1, 62.9, 72.1, 74.1, 76.1; Amm. 29.5.3, 15, 21, 36. Courage: *Iug.* 11.9, 54.5 (*animus ferox*); Amm. 29.5.41 (*Firmus ferox*).

[90] *Iug.* 38.1, 46.2, 47.3, 48.1, 62.3; Amm. 29.5.8, 15–16.

[91] *Iug.* 101.6ff.; Amm. 29.5.48. Iugurtha also tempted his opponents to come to his side by rewards and bribes; *Iug.* 23.1, 66.1.

[92] *Iug.* 102–113; Amm. 29.5.51–55. According to Seager, 'Ammianus, Theodosius and Sallust's *Jugurtha*' there are also similarities between Metellus and Marius on the one hand and Theodosius on the other, but these are less obvious to me.

[93] *Ann.* 2.52; 3.20–21, 73–74; 4.23–26.

he is called a *latro*.[94] Tacfarinas could, just as Firmus, rely on the support of a number of tribes: the Mauri, Cinithii, Numidae and the Garamantes.[95] He preferred guerrilla warfare to fighting the Romans in regular battles and also of Firmus it is said that he was 'a runabout, making sudden moves and trusting rather to secret ambuscades than to stand-up fights'.[96] Remarkable is also that Tacfarinas' brother was taken prisoner by the Romans and that the same is said of Firmus' brother Mazuca.[97] In both rebellions deserters were heavily punished and executed; Tacitus refers to the procedure of *decimatio*, a punishment *e vetere memoria*, and Ammianus mentions punitive measures *prisco more*.[98] Finally, both Tacfarinas and Firmus sought death when they knew they were defeated: Tacfarinas had himself deliberately slain in battle when he realized that his cause was lost and Firmus hanged himself.[99]

The resemblances between the wars in northern Africa as described by Sallust and Tacitus on the one hand and by Ammianus on the other cannot be coincidental. The lengthy account of the Firmus revolt was clearly meant by Ammianus to evoke the Iugurthine war and the Tacfarinas revolt, to connect his own work to the writings of Sallust and Tacitus, and to place himself in the tradition of these great historians of Rome. His audience, undoubtedly familiar with the writings of Sallust and Tacitus, cannot have failed to notice the resemblance and would have appreciated Ammianus' account all the more for it.

Just as Sallust and Tacitus had presented portraits of great generals who fought against Iugurtha and Tacfarinas—Metellus, Marius, Sulla, Camillus, Blaesus, Dolabella—, so Ammianus took the opportunity of giving a portrait of Theodosius. Theodosius was Ammianus' hero in the later books, as Julian, and to a lesser extent Ursicinus, had been his heroes in the earlier books. However, Theodosius' portrait by Ammianus, at least in the account of the Firmus revolt, is not exclusively eulogistic.

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[94] *Ann.* 2.52.1; 3.73.2; Amm. 29.5.46.
[95] *Ann.* 2.52.2, 3; 4.23.2, 26.2. For the tribes which supported Firmus, see n. 23 above.
[96] *Ann.* 3.20.4, 74.1; Amm. 29.5.7, tr. Rolfe.
[97] *Ann.* 3.74.3; Amm. 29.5.41.
[98] *Ann.* 3.21.1; Amm. 29.5.22.
[99] *Ann.* 4.25.3; Amm. 29.5.54.

## 4. *Ammianus' image of Theodosius*

Theodosius was sent to Africa in 373 with, presumably, a twofold assignment: to end the tyrannical and corrupt rule of Romanus and his accomplices, and to subdue the revolt that Firmus had started some years before. Romanus cum suis were quickly sidetracked—some of them were arrested (Romanus and Vincentius; 29.5.6–7), others executed (Castor and Martinianus; 29.5.50). The suppression of the revolt took considerably more effort.

In the report of Theodosius' African campaign Ammianus praises him highly. He presents Theodosius as an outstanding military leader and compares him to the great generals Domitius Corbulo and Lusius Quietus, and to the Republican heroes Curio, Fabius Cunctator and Pompey the Great.[100] He is called *spectatissimus dux*, *dux consultissimus*, *pugnator cautus et prudens* and *intrepidus*, *dux nobilis*, *amplissimus ductor*, and *dux suopte ingenio pertinax*.[101] It is obvious that these qualifications were not part of the document that Ammianus used as his source but additions by the author himself. It has been suggested that Ammianus, writing during the reign of Theodosius I, was not able to compose his history, in particular the parts in which Theodosius the Elder was involved, with complete freedom, and that the latter therefore was presented as a heroic figure. Telling the truth had its dangers, as Ammianus realized when he decided to continue his work (26.1.1). However, in spite of all eulogistic expressions the account of Theodosius' military campaign is not of a panegyrical nature, as some have argued.[102] Ammianus' presentation of Theodosius is not uncritical, although he presents his criticisms in a covert way.[103]

It is to be noted that in spite of the fact that he calls Firmus a brigand, a disturber of peace and a public enemy,[104] Ammianus never

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[100] 29.5.4, 5, 22, 32, 33. In 28.6.26 Ammianus refers to him as *ductor exercituum ille magnificus*. Ammianus had a predilection for referring to heroic figures from Republican times; e.g. Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild*, 126–127.

[101] 29.5.8, 35, 39, 43, 45, 52. For more references of praise, see Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 89.

[102] Demandt, 'Die Afrikanischen Unruhen', 287; Klaus Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Bonn 1968) 220.

[103] Seager, 'Ammianus, Theodosius and Sallust's *Jugurtha*', has already called attention to this in particular in comparison with Theodosius' campaign in Britain; in the report of that campaign (27.8) Ammianus presents a far more favourable picture of Theodosius. Part of what follows is based on Seager's observations.

[104] Ammianus calls him *hostis implacabilis* (29.5.4), *rebellis* (29.5.20), *quietis publicae turbator*

writes in a derogatory way about the rebel. Between the lines one can read an admiration for Firmus' military capabilities and his strong will to fight the Romans.[105] Ammianus' words *cum voraces militarium fastus ferre nequiens Firmus ad omnes dissensionum motus perflabiles gentes Mauricas concitasset*[106] may even reveal some sympathy for the revolt.

In spite of Ammianus' reference to Theodosius as a great general, and although the frequent military engagements between Theodosius and Firmus resulted in successes for the Romans, even though sometimes barely (29.5.30, 38, 39), Theodosius was never close to a complete military victory. Firmus was always able to retreat to the mountainous regions which were inaccessible for the Roman troops and was never caught.[107] In spite of defeats Firmus retained wide support. Moreover, Theodosius seems to have had trouble maintaining discipline amongst his own troops; soldiers refused to fight and others deserted to Firmus.[108] Rather late in the campaign Theodosius probably realized that only by capturing Firmus himself could the revolt be broken.[109] It was eventually through diplomacy and a subsequent alliance with some of the Moorish tribes that Theodosius was able to end the rebellion. Igmazen's betrayal especially led to Firmus' defeat. So it was not so much Theodosius' merit but rather the betrayal of some of the Moorish leaders which ended the revolt and offered Theodosius the possibility to return to Sitifis *triumphanti similis*.[110]

Curiously, Ammianus does not comment on why Theodosius broke off peace negotiations with Firmus. Twice the Moorish rebel made serious overtures to the Roman general and seems to have been prepared

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(29.5.21), *perduellis* (29.5.36, 55), *otii turbator* (29.5.45) and *latro funereus* (29.5.46).

[105] See Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild*, 91–92 for Ammianus' general mild judgement of usurpers and others who challenged imperial authority.

[106] 30.7.10. See also 27.9.1–2, where Ammianus speaks of the greed of the army, and especially of Romanus, who outdid the enemy (Firmus?) in devastating the African provinces.

[107] E.g. 29.5.39, 44. On the military aspects of Theodosius' campaign, see Laporte, 'Les armées romaines et la révolte de Firmus', 286–295.

[108] 29.5.20, 22, 24, 31, 49. At one time Theodosius even had to provide his soldiers with better food and pay to stimulate them to fight (29.5.37).

[109] 29.5.45: *amplissimus ductor* [Theodosius] *ipsum otii turbatorem petebat valido virium nisu.*

[110] 29.5.56: *Sitifim triumphanti similis redit aetatum ordinumque omnium celebrabili favore susceptus*. According to Seager, 'Ammianus, Theodosius and Sallust's *Jugurtha*', these words may be 'a final comment on the gulf between his [Theodosius'] grandiose pretensions and the hollowness of his achievements'. There is an interesting parallel here with 27.8.8, where Ammianus reports that Theodosius, after he had crushed the British tribes, entered the city (of London?) *ovantis specie laetissimus.*

for serious concessions. The first time was shortly after the arrival of Theodosius in Africa. Envoys were sent by Firmus with a letter asking for pardon and indulgence for what happened. In excuse for his behaviour he pleaded the treatment by Romanus. Promising peace in reply, Theodosius continued assembling troops and proceeded with the military campaign; he broke off peace negotiations when a deputation did not bring the hostages as had been agreed (29.5.8–9). The second time was after the loss of two battles by the Moorish tribes. Firmus and Theodosius met, after Christian priests had held preparatory deliberations with the Roman general, and the Moorish leader begged for peace. Firmus supplied the Romans with provisions, left relatives as hostages, returned the Roman captives which he had taken prisoner at the beginning of the rebellion, and restored the city of Icosium as well as military standards and a priestly crown (29.5.15–16). Although Theodosius had promised peace, he continued his policy of military confrontation and again ended peace efforts when he was told by the tribune Vincentius that Firmus was secretly planning to throw the Roman army into confusion (29.5.19). Theodosius' behaviour is hard to understand. There clearly was the opportunity for peace, but the information provided by Vincentius, who had every reason to blacken Firmus and was thus untrustworthy—if he was indeed the same Vincentius as the right-hand man of Romanus mentioned in 29.5.6[111]—in combination with the absence of hostages, made Theodosius decide to cut short the attempts to settle the conflict in a peaceful way. It seems as if Theodosius did not want peace for reasons not quite clear, but personal military success might have been one of them. If that is the case, he deliberately prolonged the war.[112]

Ammianus frequently refers to Theodosius' brutality and harshness.[113] Some examples: *Constantiniani pedites* were slain in the old-fashioned way (*prisco more militibus dedidit occidendos*); leaders of the archers had their hands cut off (29.5.22); the tribune of the archers, Curandius, was executed for his unwillingness to fight and to encourage his men to fight (29.5.24); deserters were burned alive and mutilated (29.5.31); Belles and Fericius, leaders of the Mazices, were executed (29.5.24);

[111] *PLRE* I, Vincentius 4 and 5 distinguishes the two; so does Angliviel in his note (124) at 29.5.6 in the Budé edition. According to Warmington, 'The Career of Romanus', 60 followed among others by Coşkun, 'Der *Comes* Romanus', 8 they are one and the same person.

[112] Cf. Sivan, 'Why not Marry a Barbarian?', 143.

[113] See also Laporte, 'Les armées romaines et la révolte de Firmus', 293–295.

severe punishment of traitors and attendants of Firmus in Conta (29.5.39); the head of the already dead Mazuca was torn off (29.5.42); burning alive of Evasius and Florus for having aided Firmus (29.5.43); cutting off hands and burning alive of soldiers who had panicked and turned from battle after Firmus had urged them to leave Theodosius (29.5.49); torturing and burning alive of Castor and Martinianus, who had shared in Romanus' atrocities and robberies (29.5.50). Of course a general is supposed to be strict and severe towards his enemies as well as towards deserters and disloyal soldiers in order to keep discipline amongst his troops.[114] Harsh penalties are part of that, as Ammianus himself acknowledges by vindicating Theodosius' brutality by calling critics of the general's conduct *obtrectatores malivoli* (29.5.23) and by saying that justice demanded (*ut aequitas poscebat*; 29.5.43) vexatious penalties. The quotation of Cicero that wholesome strength is better than a vain show of mercy would also justify Theodosius' severity.[115] However, Ammianus also calls Theodosius *truculentus*, *dirus* and *suppliciorum saevus repertor* (29.5.48) and although he puts these words into the mouth of Firmus, it is not unlikely that Ammianus criticizes Theodosius here for his brutal behaviour. Moreover, the many references to Theodosius' atrocities and the frequency with which they are committed, may indicate implicit criticism on Ammianus' part. The same may be true of his comparison of Theodosius to Domitius Corbulo and Lusius Quietus; both generals were known for their brutality.[116] By presenting Theodosius' brutal treatment of adversaries and disloyal soldiers Ammianus at least makes clear that the general was a perfect servant of Valentinian, who was also known for his cruelty.

In his account of the Firmus revolt it seems that Ammianus was not completely uncritical of Valentinian's best general and father of Theodosius I. His critical innuendoes indicate that Theodosius the Elder was not a spotless heroic figure. Moreover, without too much attack, Ammianus' implied criticisms of the elder Theodosius reinforce the general, rather negative, portrait of the regime of Valentinian.

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[114] *Cod. Theod.* 7.18.1–17 refer to severe penalties for desertion and on harbouring deserters.

[115] 29.5.24; Cic. *ad Brut.* 1.2a.2.

[116] For Corbulo's harsh treatment of deserters and his enforcing of military discipline, see e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 13.36. For Quietus' cruelty, see the references in E. Groag, 'Lusius Quietus 9', *RE* 13.2 (1927) 1874–1890, at 1881–1885.

## VI. *Conclusion*

The rebellion of the Moorish tribes under the command of Firmus had its origin in a family conflict, but soon developed into a separatist movement aimed at autonomy from Roman rule. Ammianus' lengthy account of the revolt is remarkable amidst the concise references to the event in other sources. Although it suffers from incompleteness concerning geographical and chronological information, the account is detailed thanks to an official report which Ammianus used as a source. The account also served to balance his narrative and to provide equilibrium between his reports of Eastern and Western events. In particular Ammianus intended to evoke Sallust and Tacitus as well as to present an implicit critical image of Theodosius the Elder.

# II

# LITERARY COMPOSITION

# LITERARY ASPECTS OF AMMIANUS' SECOND DIGRESSION ON ROME

Daniël den Hengst

*Abstract*: This article deals with literary aspects of Ammianus' second digression on Rome (28.4). Attention is given to its place within the *Res Gestae* and its relation to the first digression (14.6) and to chapter 28.1 on trials in Rome. Next the satirical character of the digression is discussed as well as its literary antecedents. Thematic correspondences with Juvenal's satires are obvious, verbal allusions or references far less. Passages from two Menippean satires by Lucian are presented that are comparable as regards content and expression. Finally it is pointed out that for Ammianus satire was not a genre from the distant past, but a style of writing that was practised by several of his contemporaries.

## I. *Rome in the 'Post-Julianic' Books*

In books 26–31, which deal with the years after Julian's death, Ammianus writes more frequently and at greater length about Rome than in books 15–25, where Julian, as Caesar and Augustus, is the centre of attention. The only substantial Roman episodes in these books are Leontius' urban prefecture in 15.7 and Constantius' visit to Rome in 16.10.[1] In book 19 one short chapter is devoted to the prefecture of Tertullus; the prefects Artemius and Maximus are mentioned only in passing in books 17 and 21.[2] In the 'post-Julianic' books on the other hand, we find extensive accounts of the prefectures of Apronianus, Symmachus, Lampadius, Viventius, and Praetextatus in books 26 and 27.[3] The explanation for this increased attention is probably that Ammianus, while writing about the Persian campaign, wanted to con-

[1] The first episode has become famous by the chapter 'The Arrest of Petrus Valvomeres' in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Bern 1946).

[2] Tertullus: 19.10; Artemius: 17.11.5; Maximus: 21.12.24. For the passages on the urban prefects in Ammianus see Maria P. van de Wiel, *Hoofdstukken uit de geschiedenis van Rome in Ammianus Marcellinus' Res Gestae* (Amsterdam 1989).

[3] Apronianus: 26.3; Symmachus, Lampadius, Viventius: 27.3; Praetextatus: 27.9.8–10.

centrate exclusively on Julian's exploits, whereas the dispersed activities of Valentinian and Valens gave him ample opportunity to interrupt his account of their deeds at regular intervals.

The focus on Rome is most pronounced in book 28, in which no fewer than 20 of the 34 pages in the Teubner edition deal with events in the capital and with Roman life in general. The first chapter, one of the longest in the *Res Gestae*, is an indictment against the hated Maximinus, vicar of the City and right-hand man of Valentinian, who instigated what amounts to a Great Purge among the Roman aristocracy. Chapter four is generally known as the second digression on Rome. It is longer and more detailed than the first digression in 14.6, but closely resembles it in tone and purpose. Both digressions have attracted scholarly attention for their brilliant thumbnail sketches of the Roman aristocrats and plebeians and for the highly personal and outspoken manner in which Ammianus airs his frustrations as a *honestus advena* in the Eternal City.[4] They have been studied primarily as sources for the lifestyle of the senators in Late Antiquity, as is evident from the titles of some recent studies, in which the digressions are pillaged for information on this subject.[5] In this article I will discuss some aspects of the second digression from a literary perspective, both internally as regards its place within the *Res Gestae* and externally with regard to the genre of writing, its possible models and the literary context of Ammianus' own time.

## II. *The two digressions, similarities and differences*

Apart from the Roman digressions in 14.6 and 28.4 there must have been at least one digression on Rome in the lost books, as is evident from Ammianus' statement in 28.4.6: *Et primo nobilitatis*, ***ut aliquotiens***

[4] Important studies on the digressions are Roger A. Pack, 'The Roman Digressions of Ammianus Marcellinus', *TAPA* 84 (1953) 181–189; Alexander Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild im Werk Ammians* (Bonn 1965) 14–21; Hans Drexler, *Ammianstudien* (Hildesheim/New York 1974) 27–38; Hans-Peter Kohns, 'Die Zeitkritik in den Romexkursen des Ammianus Marcellinus', *Chiron* 5 (1975) 485–491; Van de Wiel, *Hoofdstukken*, 18–28, 185–228; John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 214–215, 414–416, and the books quoted in the next note.

[5] Beat Näf, *Senatorisches Standesbewusstsein in spätrömischer Zeit* (Freiburg 1995); D. Schlinkert, *Ordo senatorius und Nobilitas. Die Konstitution des Senatsadels in der Spätantike* (Stuttgart 1996); Heike Niquet, *Monumenta virtutum titulique. Senatorische Selbstdarstellung im spätantiken Rom im Spiegel der epigraphischen Denkmäler* (Stuttgart 2000).

***pro locorum copia fecimus***, *dein plebis digeremus errata*.[6] In this respect the urban digressions are not unique. Ammianus also wrote more than one digression on the Saracens and on Egypt.[7] For a catchword survey of the contents of the two preserved digressions the reader is referred to the Appendix.

Both passages start with a sketch of the praefectus urbi and the popular unrest he had to face on account of a shortage of wine and measures taken by him against gluttony. This sets the tone for the digressions in which only negative characteristics of the *nobiles* and the *plebs* are enumerated.[8] The author is clearly embarrassed by the trivial nature of the information he is going to present. It is undeniably far below the level required of history, which 'usually deals with prominent events' (*discurrere per negotiorum celsitudines assuetae*, 26.1.1). In 14.6 the *Lebensaltervergleich*, describing in an elevated style Rome's rise to greatness, serves to emphasize the contrast between Rome's position in the world and the unworthy behaviour of its inhabitants.

The actual description of Roman life and manners is introduced in both digressions by a *divisio*: first the *nobilitas*, then the *plebs*. In both digressions the emphasis is heavily on the *nobilitas*. The *plebs* receives only perfunctory attention in 14.6.25–26 and a somewhat more elaborate treatment in 28.4.28–34. Unlike the aristocrats, ordinary people obviously have no standards to live up to.

The defect of the aristocracy that seems to have irritated Ammianus most is their superficiality. They do not care for glory based on merit, but only for the outward symbols of it, such as statues. Closely related to this superficiality is their total indifference to literary culture or *Bildung*. They shrink from anything that demands intellectual effort and spend their time and money on vulgar pastimes such as concerts,

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[6] As the *divisio* between *nobilitas* and *plebs* shows, this cannot refer in general to passages on Rome, for instance as part of the chapters on the urban prefectures, because in those chapters such a *divisio* is never found.

[7] 14.4.2: *super quorum* (the Saracens) *moribus* ***licet in actibus principis Marci et postea aliquotiens*** *memini rettulisse, tamen nunc quoque pauca de isdem expediam carptim*; 22.15.1: *strictim…res Aegyptiacae tangantur,* ***quarum notitiam in actibus Hadriani et Severi principum digessimus late***.

[8] In 28.4.5 Ammianus uses the strong expression *tanta…labes insanabilium flagitiorum*. At the beginning of the first digression, in 14.6.7, he blames *levitas paucorum incondita*, 'the disorderly frivolity of a few', for Rome's stained reputation, but he does not repeat this restriction in the course of the digression proper. In the second digression it is lacking altogether. The translations in this article are taken from William Hamilton, *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354–378)* (Harmondsworth 1986).

theatre and dance. Secondly, the ostentation of riches is censured at great length. The aristocrats try to create an impression with their troops of clients, servants and slaves following them wherever they go. They show off their riches by wearing outrageously expensive garments and by building extravagant palaces.

Next comes their arrogance, which betrays itself in their disdain for people born outside the *pomerium* and in the unreasonable demands they make on their clients. They themselves are totally unmanly in their lack of endurance. In their obsessive fear of contagion they do not dare to visit their sick friends. In some respects, such as their fascination for gambling and the races, they are no better than the plebeians.

The 'lowest class of the poor people' (*turba imae sortis et paupertinae*), as Ammianus chooses to call the *plebs* in 14.6.25, seems to be beneath contempt, living as they do exclusively for food, drink, and vulgar amusements. These are the common elements in both digressions. The vignettes depicting these vices may be different, but the substance and purport of the diatribes are identical. The second digression lacks a lofty introduction like the *Lebensaltervergleich* of 14.6, but for the modern reader this is compensated for by some very interesting new elements, such as the excessive pride in family names felt by aristocrats as well as plebeians, the pulp authors read by the aristocracy (Juvenal and Marius Maximus), their addiction to astrology, and the way they behave in financial matters such as loans, debts, and wills. All in all it seems justified to characterize the two digressions as variations on a set of themes, different in execution and emphasis, but similar in tone and substance.

## III. *The views of Hartke and Matthews*

Attempts have been made to point out differences between the two digressions. In his *Römische Kinderkaiser*,[9] Hartke sees a development in Ammianus' descriptions of Rome under the influence of historical events witnessed by the author, more specifically the impact of the pretender Eugenius in 394. He characterizes the first digression as 'eine kühl berichtende Darstellung aus der Kultur- und Sittengeschichte der

[9] Werner Hartke, *Römische Kinderkaiser. Eine Strukturanalyse römischen Denkens und Daseins* (Darmstadt 1972) 62–75.

Stadt'. In it we see only the author himself, not the Roman public, which has completely lost sight of its glorious past. In the second digression on the other hand, the public is, according to Hartke, directly addressed in the second person singular. Both nobility and *plebs* are shown in action. They are aware of the obligations their family names impose upon them, but their behaviour is no more than an empty masquerade in historical costumes. Hartke concludes: 'Angesichts derartig grundlegender Unterschiede ist es eigentlich erstaunlich, dass man überhaupt jene beiden Exkurse zu einer Gesamtschau vereinigte. Man hätte bedenken sollen, dass jener im 14. Buch, dieser im 28. Buch steht und zwischen der Abfassung der beiden Bücher ein nicht unbeträchtlicher Zeitraum gelegen haben muss. In dieser Zeit war aber allerhand Weltbewegendes passiert, und Ammian wie Rom hatten sich geändert.' The concluding statement about the momentous changes during the period in which Ammianus wrote his history is plausible *per se*. The problem is, however, that the differences postulated by Hartke are, as far as I can see, not to be found in the text. The two pieces of evidence he adduces either are found in both digressions or are contestable. The first applies to the use of the second person singular, which is not confined to the second digression, as Hartke claims. More importantly, these should not be taken as a personal address, but represent a generalized use of the second person, which is a characteristic of the *Diatribenstil* in satirical writing.[10] Hartke's interpretation of the prepositional phrase *ad imitationem* in 28.4.32 *ad imitationem Tauricae gentis peregrinos vociferantur* (sc. the Roman *plebs*) *pelli debere* as "intentional" is strained, to say the least.[11] It seems impossible, therefore, to subscribe to Hartke's view that there are fundamental differences between the two digressions.

[10] For the generalized use of the second person singular see A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik* II (Munich 1965) 419. Ammianus uses it also in the first digression: *at nunc si ad aliquem bene nummatum tumentemque ideo honestus advena salutatum introieris primitus, tamquam exoptatus suscipieris* e.q.s. (14.6.12). For the *Diatribenstil* see E.G. Schmidt, 'Diatribe und Satire', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock* 15 (1966) 507–515.

[11] Hartke, *Kinderkaiser*, 64: 'Der Ausdruck *ad imitationem* ist viel dynamischer zu verstehen als ein blosses *ut* (4.9); dieses bedeutete einen formalen Vergleich, jenes enthält einen intentionalen Sinn.' In classical prose this may indeed be the case, e.g. Cic. *Rep.* 2.79 *ut ad imitationem sui vocet alios*. In late Latin the intentional meaning seems to have disappeared; compare Macr. *somn.* 1.5.9 *corpus solidum quod* στερεόν *vocant, qualis est tessera quae* κύβος *vocatur* and in the next section *corpus solidum quod* στερεόν *vocant ad imitationem tesserae quae* κύβος *vocatur*.

A different approach has been chosen by Matthews, who compares their structure and internal cohesion.[12] On the basis of some perceptive observations he concludes i.a. that the first digression is 'more thematic in its emphasis' and that 'its various topics are introduced with a greater variety and resource of language and style.' It cannot be denied that the vignettes in the second digression are shorter and very loosely connected, which gives the whole piece a somewhat rambling character, whereas the first digression is more coherent due to the repeated comparisons of the present with the idealized past, a theme introduced at the outset by the *Lebensaltervergleich*. I am afraid, however, that Matthews is overstating his case when he opposes the down-to-earth introduction in 28.4.4 (about Ampelius' regulations concerning opening hours of *thermopolia* and the sale of hot water and meat) to the *Lebensaltervergleich* in 14.6 and reads this as a sign of different preoccupations on the part of the author, ideological in the first, merely descriptive in the second. As we have seen earlier, the starting-point of the two digressions is almost identical, since the immediate cause given by Ammianus for writing the first digression was also the unruly behaviour of the mob *ob inopiam vini, cuius avidis usibus vulgus intentum ad motus asperos incitatur et crebros* (14.6.1). Still, Matthews' discussion of the digressions is very illuminating and his epigrammatic characterization of the two digressions as 'less photographic archive than portfolio of cartoons' is striking indeed. So much for the relation between the two digressions.

## IV. *Qualities valued by Ammianus*

Few readers will accept Ammianus' picture of Roman society at face value. It is evidently a wilfully distorted and grossly exaggerated indictment of those aspects of Roman life and manners that had incurred Ammianus' displeasure. What it does reveal,—*e contrario*, one might say—are the human qualities Ammianus valued most. His strictures reveal a very serious person, an officer and a gentleman, formal, if not solemn, in the ways he expresses his opinions. He must have had a strong sense of self-esteem, judging from his indignation at the lack of respect with which he, a *honestus advena* (14.6.12) and *vetus in commilitio principis recens digressus* (28.4.20), was received in Rome. On his

[12] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 414–416.

travels he had known the winters of northern Gaul and the summers of Mesopotamia and Egypt, which is why he scoffed at Roman dandies who thought themselves Alexanders and Caesars if they ventured outside the city walls, and complained of the heat when a ray of sun pierced their pretty parasols (28.4.18). In the army he had learned the importance of friendship and mutual trust in dangerous situations, which explains his contempt for people who make friends only at the gambling table (28.4.21), but for fear of contagion refuse to visit them when they are ill (14.6.23). For him, divination and astrology are matters of great importance when vital decisions have to be made, and therefore he is indignant about the consultation of horoscopes to decide when it is safe to go to the baths (28.4.24). Most appealing is his respect for *Bildung*, of which he had already given ample proof in his many learned digressions, and which he clearly regarded as an end in itself, as the anecdote about Socrates shows, who, while waiting for his execution, wanted to study Stesichorus *ut aliquod sciens amplius e vita discedat* (28.4.15). Norden, and many scholars after him, have sneered at this aspect of Ammianus' work. He called the digressions 'unsäglich banal und in ihrer gespreizten Schaustellung von allerlei gelehrten- oder dilettantenhaftem Raritätenkram widerlich'.[13] It is my impression, however, that there is more at stake here than just an inclination to show off. Ammianus is defending and preserving the cultural heritage he cherishes and he is angry at the neglect of this heritage in Rome, *imperii virtutumque omnium lar* (16.10.13). When reading the digressions, and indeed the whole of the *Res Gestae*, we must keep in mind that Ammianus was writing in the aftermath of the battle of Adrianople.[14] For an officer who had been in the company of the emperor for years and who had taken part in his campaigns in Gaul and Persia, who was, moreover, fully aware of the dangerous situation Rome was in after that grave defeat, Roman society must have been deeply disappointing. Were these the people the Roman armies were fighting to protect?

[13] Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Darmstadt 1958[5]) II, 647.

[14] *Ita turbido instantium studio orbis Romani pernicies ducebatur* (31.4.6). For the impact of the battle at Adrianople see Johannes Straub, 'Die Wirkung der Niederlage bei Adrianopel auf die Diskussion über das Germanenproblem in der spätrömischen Literatur', *Philologus* 95 (1943) 255–286, repr. in *Regeneratio Imperii* (Darmstadt 1972) 195–219, and Noel Lenski, 'Initium mali Romano imperio', *TAPA* 127 (1997) 129–168.

## V. *The relation between the digression and the account of the trials under Maximinus (28.1)*

The place where Ammianus inserted his second digression on Rome into the *Res Gestae* poses a serious problem. It begins with the programmatic statement *Diu multumque a negotiis discussus urbanis adigente cumulo foris gestorum ad ea strictim exsequenda regrediar exorsus ab Olybrii praefectura*.[15] One might have expected such a statement in 26.3, where Ammianus resumes his series of reports on the urban prefecture after the long interruption in the Julianic books.[16] Here it is separated only by two short chapters on *foris gesta*, in this case military activities in the provinces, from the exceptionally long chapter 28.1 with its account of the trials conducted in the City by the vicar Maximinus, which Ammianus had concluded with the words *is urbanarum rerum status, ut ita dixerim, fuit* (28.1.57).[17] No less surprising is the fact that, although in both chapters Olybrius and Ampelius are mentioned in their function of *praefectus urbi*, there is no cross-reference whatsoever. In other words, the account of the trials in chapter one and the digression in chapter four on the aristocracy and the *plebs* of the City seem to belong to completely different worlds.[18] It looks as if Ammianus has inserted either the account of the trials or the digression at a later time without bothering to make the necessary adjustments.[19] It may be relevant in this context that the author tells us himself, at the outset of 28.1, about his reluctance to present a detailed account of the persecution of the Senate by Maximinus: *ac licet ab hoc textu cruento gestorum exquisite narrando iustus me retraheret metus* (28.1.2).[20] Could it be that Ammianus had initially shied away from a description of Maximinus' reign of terror, but later overcame

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[15] The reading *discussus* (Gelenius) is dubious, since no parallel for this use of *discutere* can be found in Ammianus, or, for that matter, in the TLL. *Digressus* (A) would suit the context much better; cf. 20.11.30: *narratione redire, unde digressa est, festinante*.

[16] The last short reference to the urban prefecture had been 21.12.24 (Maximus).

[17] It will not do to distinguish *negotia urbana* as referring to Roman affairs in general from *res Romanae* in the sense of 'trials in Rome', since Ammianus ends the digression with the words *Sit satis interim haec digessisse super rebus urbanis* (28.4.35).

[18] Duly noted by Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 214–215. There is no note ad loc. in Marie-Anne Marié, *Ammien Marcellin, Histoire, Tome V, Livres XXVI–XXVIII* (Paris 1984).

[19] At the time of writing this paper I had not seen Rita Lizzi Testa, *Senatori, Popolo, Papi. Il governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani* (Bari 2004), who writes on p. 20 "sembra quasi che Ammiano non avesse ancora scritto il racconto delle persecuzioni, o se ne fosse dimenticato."

[20] For text and translation of 28.1–4 see the Appendix to the article of Den Boeft in this volume.

his fear, *praesentis temporis modestia fretus* (28.1.2) and inserted that painful account? And did he purposely transfer the blame from the urban prefects Olybrius and Ampelius to Valentinian's creature Maximinus, portraying the senators as victims of persecution rather than criminals receiving their due?[21] A clear-cut answer cannot be hoped for, but it is obvious that the description of the trials in Rome under Maximinus caused Ammianus serious difficulties and that the final arrangement of book 28 with the two chapters on Roman matters following each other so closely is less than perfect.

## VI. *The satirical character of the digression*

After these considerations concerning the place of the second digression in the *Res Gestae*, it is time to turn to questions of genre, models and literary context. The style of writing is called satirical by every critic who has studied the digressions. It is easy to see why. Ammianus' contemporary, the grammarian Diomedes, defined satire as follows: *carmen apud Romanos…maledicum et ad carpenda hominum vitia…compositum*;[22] and, as Rudd says, 'Above all else, Roman satire is about Roman life.'[23] The digressions qualify on both counts, but there is much more. The satirist is by inclination conservative. Idealization of the past goes hand

[21] Ammianus dates the trials vaguely to *anno sextimo decimo et eo diutius post Nepotiani exitium* (28.1.1), instead of mentioning the urban prefects, as he does in 26.3.1–2, 27.3.11–13, and 27.9.9. The reference to the massacre under Nepotianus in 350 (*cuius stolidum ingenium adeo plebi Romanae patribusque exitio fuit, uti passim domus, fora, viae templaque cruore aut cadaveribus opplerentur bustorum modo*; Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 42.7) sets the tone for what is to follow and diverts the attention from the urban prefects in office at the time. See on the chronological problems involved Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 233–234. Note also that in 28.1.15 Ammianus defends himself against possible criticisms of his chronology in terms that are reminiscent of his programmatic statement at the beginning of book 26: *Et quoniam existimo forsitan aliquos haec lecturos exquisite scrutando notare strepentes id actum prius esse, non illud* e.q.s. See also in this volume Den Boeft, pp. 302–303.

[22] For a discussion of this *locus classicus* see C.A. van Rooy, *Studies in classical satire and related literary theory* (Leiden 1965) 1–29. An excellent introduction is Susan H. Braund, *Roman Verse Satire* (Oxford 1992). Still useful from a literary point of view is William S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton 1982). An important relativization of the concept of the *Persona*, introduced by Anderson into the study of Roman satire, is Ronald Mayer, 'Persona⟨l⟩ Problems. The Literary Persona in Antiquity Revisited', *MD* 50 (2003) 55–80. For an overview of themes in satire see Niall Rudd, *Themes in Roman Satire* (London 1985).

[23] Rudd, *Themes*, ix.

in hand with denunciation of the present. As in Roman verse satire, in Ammianus' digressions this leads to sharp contrasts and sarcastic comparisons, for instance in 28.4.21 between the sadness of a vulgar gambler, indignant because a *proconsularis* is given a better place at table, and the disappointment of M. Porcius Cato after his defeat for the praetorship. Satirists make their point by grotesque exaggerations and so does Ammianus. To mention just one of the numerous specimens of hyperbole I quote 28.4.19: after bathing, the rich man 'has his presses opened and makes a careful inspection of his shimmering robes, of which he has brought enough with him **to dress eleven people**'.[24] Perhaps the most striking characteristic of satire is the pursuit of ἐναργεία or *evidentia*, vividness of presentation by minutely detailed description. Ammianus is especially good at this. I will give three examples. In the first digression we find this description of women dancers, brilliantly translated by Hamilton: 'Wherever you turn your eyes you can see any number of women with curled ringlets, old enough, if they were married, to be mothers of three, skimming the floor with their feet to the point of exhaustion and launching themselves into the bird-like evolutions by which they represent the countless scenes which form the imaginary content of theatrical pieces' (14.6.20).[25] Equally unforgettable is the picture of the arrogant noblemen who avert their face to avoid being kissed: 'they turn their head to one side like a bad-tempered bull…and offer their knee or hand instead'.[26] If they stoop to ask a *peregrinus* where he is living or where he takes his baths, 'they believe that a stranger is given an abundance of all the duties of courtesy' (28.4.10; tr. Rolfe).[27] The aristocrats are so proud of the magnificent fish and dormice they offer their guests that 'they bore them to death by repeated expressions of wonder at the unheard-of size of the creatures, especially when **some thirty secretaries** are in attendance with writing-cases and notebooks to take down the statistics, and **all**

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[24] …*solutis pressoriis vestes luce nitentes ambigua diligenter explorat, quae una portantur,* ***sufficientes ad induendos homines undecim***.

[25] …*et licet, quocumque oculos flexeris, feminas affatim multas spectare cirratas, quibus, si nupsissent, per aetatem ter iam nixus poterat suppetere liberorum, ad usque taedium pedibus pavimenta tergentes iactari volucriter gyris, dum exprimunt innumera simulacra, quae finxere fabulae theatrales.*

[26] 28.4.10: *Ex his quidam, cum salutari pectoribus oppositis coeperint, osculanda capita in modum taurorum minacium obliquantes adulatoribus offerunt genua savianda vel manus.*

[27] …*abundare omni cultu humanitatis peregrinum putantes.* The last phrase is strangely misinterpreted by Robin Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Seven Studies in His Language and Thought* (Columbia 1986) 20, who gives the following comment: 'Ammianus castigates those who are so arrogant as to think it (i.e. *humanitas*) unroman'.

**that is wanting to complete the appearance of a school is the schoolmaster'** (28.4.13).[28]

The similarities to satirical writing can also be observed in the microstructure of the digressions. As a rule, a satire is not a well-ordered piece of reasoning, but rather a series of vignettes with a maximum of visual impact. The same applies to Ammianus' digressions. Especially in the second we find a string of short sketches introduced by words like *plerique, aliqui, quidam, alii, sunt qui, pauci, pars eorum* etc.

The frequent use of the generalized second person is another stylistic feature that the digressions have in common with Roman verse satire.[29]

## VII. *The element of distortion and the catalogues of names*

Satire has been defined as 'the playfully critical distortion of the familiar'.[30] One hesitates whether playfulness is the right word in speaking about Ammianus' sketches, but distortion certainly is. As Braund remarks, satirical works can be plotted upon the graph created by the scales of playfulness and criticism.[31] In Ammianus the element of criticism is markedly stronger than that of playfulness. His digressions are serious and moralistic in intent, in accordance with the overall purport of his work. Nevertheless distortion is certainly part of them. I am afraid this has not been taken sufficiently into account by some who have studied the most interesting new element in the second digression, namely the lists of aristocratic and plebeian family names in 28.4.7 and 28.4.28. The former list has suffered badly in the transmission of the text, as the apparatus in the Teubner edition makes clear.[32] Seyfarth, following the Fuldensis, reads: *praenominum claritudine conspicui quidam, ut putant, in immensum semet extollunt, cum Reburri et Flavonii et Pagonii Gereonesque appellentur ac Dalii cum Tarraciis et Ferasiis aliisque ita decens*

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[28] *quorum magnitudo saepius replicata non sine taedio praesentium ut antehac inusitata laudatur assidue maxime, cum haec eadem numerantes notarii triginta prope assistant cum thecis et pugillaribus tabulis, ut deesse solus magister ludi litterarii videretur.*

[29] For the stylistic characteristics of Juvenal in particular J. de Decker, *Juvenalis declamans; étude sur la rhétorique déclamatoire dans les Satires de Juvénal* (Gent 1913) is still indispensable.

[30] Leonard Feinberg, *The Satirist: his Temperament, Motivation and Influence* (Ames, Iowa 1963) 7.

[31] Braund, *Roman Verse Satire*, 4.

[32] See the discussion in Niquet, *Monumenta Virtutum*, 113–115.

*sonantibus originum insignibus multis*.[33] The only well-known name in this series is *Tarracius*.[34] In the text of Gelenius we find *Flabianii* instead of *Flavonii*. Niquet rightly insists that we should take Gelenius' text seriously, because it may well represent the text of the Hersfeldensis, from which the Fuldensis is derived, so she plausibly proposes to accept *Flabiani* and identify them with the illustrious Flaviani. If this is right, we have two well-known names from the Roman aristocracy at the end of the fourth century. For Anthony Birley this was not enough.[35] On the basis of Ammianus' text he produced the following list by 'desperate and palaeographically implausible remedies', as he himself admits on p. 59: *cum ⟨P⟩robi et Faltonii et Ragonii Ceioniique appellentur Albini cum Pammachiis et Vitrasiis…que*. Now we have a veritable Roman Debrett. In my opinion this suggestion is best soon forgotten, not just for palaeographical reasons, but above all because a satirical digression is the wrong place to look for a *bona fide* list of noble Roman families. Does Birley also take the plebeian names in 28.4.28 seriously? There we read about plebeians taking pride in the following *nomina culta*: *ut Messores, Statarii, Semicupae et Serapini et Cicymbricus cum Gluturino et Trulla et Lucanicus cum Porclaca et Salsula similesque innumeri*.[36] And moreover, Ammianus may not have treated Roman dignitaries with kid gloves,[37] but to attack by name so many leading families at the same time would be a different matter altogether.

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[33] There is an intriguing similarity between Hier. *Ep*. 107.2 (about a relative of the addressee Laeta, who had been urban prefect): *propinquus vester Gracchus, nobilitatem patriciam nomine sonans* and Ammianus' *aliisque ita decens sonantibus originum insignibus multis*.

[34] For instance in 28.1.27 we find *Tarracius Bassus, postea urbi praefectus*.

[35] Anthony R. Birley, 'Indirect Means of Tracing Marius Maximus', *Historiae Augustae Colloquia. Nova Series III* (Bari 1995) 56–74.

[36] Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild*, 20 gives the following brilliant translation: 'die Ackerbauers und Stehestills, Schmerbauchs und Scheuegotts, die Gurkes und Schluckaufs, Schöpfkelles und Knobelwursts, die Schmatzferkels und Salztopfs.' It may be noted in passing that *ut Messores* is an unnecessary conjecture by Heraeus for *Cimessores*, the reading of the Hersfeldensis and the Fuldensis, defended by A. Bartalucci, 'I "nomina culta" dei plebei urbani in Ammiano (*Rer. Gest*. XXVIII, 4, 28)', *Studi classici e orientali* 9 (1960) 147–160, as meaning "Cabbage-eaters", from *cyma* and *edere* (on p. 150). Bartalucci offers many more ingenious suggestions, which I cannot go into here. He ends his article with this admonition: 'Alterare questi nomi è inutile gioco congetturalistico: essi, così come ci sono pervenuti nella tradizione migliore, rispondono pienamente all'assunto morale e satirico dello scrittore.'

[37] Witness his criticism of Petronius Probus in 27.11.1, who owned property all over the Roman world *iuste an secus, non iudicioli est nostri*.

## VIII. *Are there traces of Juvenal in the digression?*

Up to this point I have managed with some difficulty not to mention the name of Juvenal, although one is constantly reminded of him when reading the digressions, and despite the fact that he is mentioned by Ammianus himself along with the biographer Marius Maximus: *Iuvenalem et Marium Maximum curatiore studio legunt, nulla volumina praeter haec in profundo otio contrectantes, quam ob causam non iudicioli est nostri*.[38] One wonders why the reference is so contemptuous,[39] seeing that both theme and tone of Ammianus' digressions have much in common with Juvenal's satires. Different answers have been suggested. 'Perhaps he was not altogether attracted by the thought that he was himself a part of the Syrian Orontes which had flowed into the Tiber!', Thompson proposed.[40] For my part, I would suggest that Ammianus disapproved of the triviality and, at least where Juvenal is concerned, the scurrility of the subject matter of both authors. For Juvenal this needs no explanation. For Marius Maximus we have only the testimony of the *Historia Augusta*, where he is qualified as *homo verbosissimus, qui et mythistoricis se voluminibus inplicavit* (*Q* 1.2).[41] Neither author, therefore, con-

[38] Ammianus is one of three sources for this biographer, who in all probability is identical with L. Marius Maximus Perpetuus Aurelianus, consul in 223. He is mentioned thirty times in the *Historia Augusta*, in which he seems to have been used as a source for the lives from Hadrian up to Caracalla. The fragments are to be found in G. Barbieri, *L'albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino* (Rome 1952). There is another reference to Marius Maximus in the Scholia on Juvenal 4.53. See for this biographer Birley, 'Indirect Means' and Idem, 'Marius Maximus: the Consular Biographer', *ANRW* II 34.3 (Berlin 1997) 2678–2757, and for an extremely sceptical view François Paschoud, 'Propos sceptiques et iconoclastes sur Marius Maximus', *Historiae Augustae Colloquia. Nova Series* VII (Bari 1999) 241–254. Frank Wittchow, *Exemplarisches Erzählen bei Ammianus Marcellinus* (Leipzig 2001) 321 n. 19 has the interesting suggestion that Ammianus may have chosen the reign of Nerva as his starting point not so much in continuation of Tacitus, but rather in emulation with Marius Maximus.

[39] Cf. the judgment on Petronius Probus, quoted above n. 36.

[40] E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 15, with reference to Juv. 3.62 *iam pridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*. P.J. Smith, 'A Note on Ammianus and Juvenal', *LCM* 19 (1994) 23–24 pointed to the virulent anti-Greek feelings expressed in *Satire* 3. Roger Rees, 'Ammianus satiricus', in: Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and its Historian* (London/New York 1999) 141–156, suggested (on p. 150) that Ammianus was stung by the qualification of historians in Juv. 7.105 as *genus ignavum, quod lecto gaudet et umbra*.

[41] What is meant by *mythistoriae* can be inferred from *OM* 1.5: the (fictitious) biographer Cordus has written about trivialities *quasi vel de Traiano aut Pio aut Marco sciendum sit, quotiens processerit, quando cibos variaverit et quando vestem mutaverit et quos quando promoverit*.

tributes anything to *doctrina* and both of them fall far below the standard required of historical writing, whose task it is *ipsas rerum digerere summitates* (31.5.10).

The only systematic study of possible traces of Juvenal in Ammianus' work has been undertaken by Rees.[42] In his article Rees compares passages from both writers classified according to four categories: rhetorical trope, subject matter, victim of satire, and lexical echoes. Under 'rhetorical trope' we find very broad notions such as the contrast between past and present time, exaggeration, and the insertion of catalogues or enumerations, that are indeed found in both writers (and in many others besides), but without any verbal correspondences. In some cases, such as the juxtaposition of 28.4.4 and Juv. 1.22–29, I cannot even detect a thematical correspondence. The only parallel that merits attention is that between Juv. 3.107–108 *laudare paratus / si bene ructavit, si rectum minxit amicus* and 27.3.5 *homo indignanter admodum sustinens, si etiam cum spueret, non laudaretur, ut id quoque prudenter praeter alios faciens*. Ammianus' words look like a bowdlerized and priggish paraphrase of the poet, but in the absence of verbal correspondences I would hesitate to call it an allusion. To the categories 'subject matter' and 'victim of satire' (the dividing line between the two categories is not made clear) belongs a large number of satirical themes and stock characters such as legacy hunting, ostentation of riches, gambling, excessive dinners, eunuchs, flatterers and clients. Here again one looks in vain for lexical agreement and the only conclusion can be that several abuses denounced by Ammianus were also criticized by Juvenal, which is not surprising.[43] The category 'lexical' contains three items, only one of which seems worthy of note: 28.2.4: *nec in publicum prodeunt nec prandent…antequam ephemeride scrupulose sciscitata* e.q.s. and Juv. 6.573–581: *in cuius manibus…tritas cernis ephemeridas…aegra licet iaceat, capiendo nulla videtur / aptior hora cibo nisi quam dederit Petosiris*. The consultation of a horoscope before taking a meal and the rare *ephemeris* may well be a rem-

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*quae ille omnia exsequendo libros mythistoriis replevit talia scribendo, cum omnino* ***rerum vilium*** *aut nulla scribenda sint aut nimis pauca*. From 26.1.1 it is clear how Ammianus valued this kind of writing.

[42] See note 39.

[43] The one case where there is verbal similarity, viz. 14.6.9 *sudant sub ponderibus lacernarum, quas…iugulis ipsis annectunt, nimia subtegminum tenuitate perflabiles* and Juv. 6.259 *hae sunt quae tenui sudant in cyclade*, is not mentioned. These passages are discussed along with texts from Jerome and Claudian by Alan Cameron, 'St. Jerome and Claudian', *VChr* 19 (1965) 111–113.

iniscence of Juvenal.[44] All in all Rees' survey yields a meagre harvest, one or two watered down reminiscences, no convincing allusions, let alone references.[45] It is of course an established fact that Juvenal was *en vogue* in the second half of the fourth century,[46] and to my mind it is *a priori* likely that Ammianus read him, but I do not think that Rees' presentation of the evidence justifies the conclusion on p. 150 that 'this accumulation of parallels in style, content, victim and lexis indicates a **thorough and conscious employment of the *Satires*** in the composition of Ammianus' digressions'. Referring to Fornara's study of the way in which Ammianus used his sources,[47] Rees compares the way in which Ammianus evokes Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus without actually naming them. In my opinion this comparison is not justified by the facts. The reader is reminded of these historians by a considerable number of literal quotations from their work, which prove that Ammianus has read them carefully as stylistic models. The questionable correspondences between Juvenal and Ammianus do not justify adding Juvenal's name to the list of authors evoked in the *Res Gestae* on a par with the historians mentioned above, let alone Cicero and Vergil.

## IX. *Menippean Satire and Lucian*

In his comparative survey of Greek and Roman literature Quintilian distinguishes the verse satire as represented by Lucilius, Horace, and Persius from another branch of satire of which Varro is the oldest Roman representative.[48] This older form of satire, written mainly in prose and Greek in origin, is called Menippean after its creator, Menippus of Gadara. Latin specimens of the genre after Varro are

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[44] Also *in publicum prodeunt* may have been inspired by *ad primum lapidem vectari cum placet* in Juv. 6.577.

[45] For the terms 'allusion' and 'reference' see Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* (Cambridge 1998) 21–25.

[46] Gilbert Highet, *Juvenal the Satirist* (Oxford 1954) 180–190; Alan Cameron, 'Literary Allusions in the Historia Augusta', *Hermes* 92 (1964) 363–377; Ulrich Knoche, *Die römische Satire* (Göttingen 1984[4]) 95.

[47] Charles W. Fornara, 'Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus, II: Ammianus' Knowledge and Use of Greek and Roman Literature', *Historia* 41 (1992) 420–438.

[48] Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.95: *alterum illud etiam prius saturae genus, sed non sola carminum varietate mixtum condidit Terentius Varro, vir Romanorum eruditissimus.*

Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and Petronius' *Satyrica*. The best known and best preserved Greek representative of the genre is the Syrian Lucian of Samosata. In terms of direct influence Lucian may well have been more important for Ammianus than Juvenal. Two works of his in particular are thematically very close to Ammianus' digressions, *Nigrinus* and *De mercede conductis*.[49] The former is a straightforward attack on Roman life and manners from a Greek philosopher named Nigrinus. On entering the City he immediately regrets having left Greece to come to see τὸν ἐνταῦθα θόρυβον, συκοφάντας καὶ προσαγορεύσεις ὑπερηφάνους καὶ δεῖπνα καὶ κόλακας καὶ μιαιφονίας καὶ διαθηκῶν προσδοκίας καὶ φιλίας ἐπιπλάστους (*Nigr.* 17).[50] This reads like a table of contents of Ammianus' digressions. There are thematical correspondences with the digressions on every page. The philosopher pours scorn both on the arrogant rich and on the servile flatterers who throw away their dignity only in order to obtain a dinner invitation. Like in Ammianus, the ordinary people get off just as badly. What is more, there are verbal correspondences which make it highly probable in my opinion that Ammianus read and has imitated Lucian. Compare for instance *Nigr.* 13, in which Lucian describes a flashy Roman, whose behaviour in the baths is strongly reminiscent of a similar scene in *Res Gestae* 28.4.8–9:[51]

*Nigr.* 13: ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ κἀν τοῖς γυμνασίοις καὶ λουτροῖς ὀχληρὸς ἦν θλίβων τοῖς οἰκέταις καὶ στενοχωρῶν τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας.[52]

28.4.8–9: *praegresso exercitu arma cogentes manipulatim concitato fragore sequitur multitudo servorum. Tales ubi comitantibus singulos quinquaginta ministris tholos introierint balnearum* e.q.s.

[49] The similarities between some of the scenes depicted in these works and Juvenal 3 and 5 are so pronounced that both Eric Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London 1980) 624–629 and Jean Bompaire, *Lucien Écrivain. Imitation et Création* (Paris 1958) 508 are inclined to believe that Lucian made use of Juvenal.

[50] 'the hurly-burly there—informers, haughty greetings, dinners, flatterers, murders, legacy-hunting, feigned friendships' (the translations from Lucian are by A.M. Harmon).

[51] This parallel and the next one I found in Klaus Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt 1982) 98 and Van de Wiel, *Hoofdstukken*, 21 n. 10.

[52] 'But when he made himself a nuisance at the athletic clubs and the baths by jostling and crowding passers with his retinue' e.q.s.

In *Nigr.* 21 the description of the way in which the rich man flaunts his purple garments and his rings recalls Amm. 14.6.9. The way he wishes to be greeted resembles Ammianus 28.4.10 in minute detail:

*Nigr.* 21: πῶς γὰρ οὐ γελοῖοι μὲν πλουτοῦντες αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰς πορφυρίδας προφαίνοντες καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους προτείνοντες…οἱ δὲ σεμνότεροι καὶ προσκυνεῖσθαι περιμένοντες …δεῦ προσελθόντα καὶ ὑποκύψαντα …τὸ στῆθος ἢ τὴν δεξιὰν καταφιλεῖν, ζηλωτὸν καὶ περίβλεπτον τοῖς μηδὲ τούτου τυγχάνουσιν.[53]

28.4.10: *Ex his quidam, cum salutari pectoribus oppositis coeperint, osculanda capita in modum taurorum minacium obliquantes adulatoribus offerunt genua savianda vel manus id illis sufficere ad beate vivendum existimantes.*

The Roman *plebs* is described as follows:

*Nigr.* 29: Ἤδη δὲ τούτων (sc. the philosophers) ἀποστὰς τῶν ἄλλων αὖθις ἀνθρώπων ἐμέμνητο καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταραχὰς διεξῄει καὶ τὸν ὠθισμὸν καὶ τὰ θέατρα καὶ τὸν ἱππόδρομον καὶ τὰς τῶν ἡνιόχων εἰκόνας καὶ τὰ τῶν ἵππων ὀνόματα καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς στενωποῖς περὶ τούτων διαλόγους· πολλὴ γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡ ἱππομανία καὶ πολλῶν ἤδη σπουδαίων εἶναι δοκούντων ἐπείληπται.[54]

28.4.29 *eisque* (the plebeians) *templum et habitaculum et contio et cupitorum spes omnis Circus est Maximus; et videre licet per fora et compita et plateas et conventicula circulos multos collectos* …28.04.30: *Inter quos hi, qui ad satietatem vixerunt…clamitant saepe rem publicam stare non posse, si futura concertatione, quem quisque vindicat, carceribus non exsiluerit princeps et inominalibus equis parum cohaerenter circumflexerit metam.*

Lucian's *De mercede conductis* describes the plight of a salaried professor in a Roman household. He has to fawn upon his rich patron and to deal with the *nomenclator*:

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[53] 'To begin with, are not the rich ridiculous? They display their purple gowns and show their rings…some, lordlier than the rest, even require obeisance to be made to them…you must go up, bow your head…and kiss the man's breast or his hand, while those who are denied even this privilege envy and admire you!'

[54] 'Leaving the philosophers, he recurred to the rest of mankind, and told about the uproar of the city, the crowding, the theatres, the races, the statues of the drivers, the names of the horses, and the conversations in the streets about these matters. The craze for horses is really great, you know, and men with a name for earnestness have caught it in great numbers.'

*Merc. cond.* 10: ἕωθέν τε ἐξανιστάμενον περιμένειν ὠθούμενον καὶ ἀποκλειόμενον καὶ ἀναίσχυντον ἐνίοτε καὶ ὀχληρὸν δοκοῦντα καὶ ὑπὸ θυρωρῷ κακῶς συρίζοντι καὶ ὀνομακλήτορι Λιβυκῷ ταττόμενον καὶ μισθὸν τελοῦντα τῆς μνήμης τοῦ ὀνόματος.[55]

14.6.15: *Homines enim eruditos et sobrios ut infaustos et inutiles vitant eo quoque accedente, quod et nomenculatores assueti haec et talia venditare mercede accepta lucris quosdam et prandiis inserunt subditicios ignobiles et obscuros.*

From these examples I think we may conclude that the literary antecedents of Ammianus' Roman digressions must not be looked for exclusively in Latin verse satire, but also in the tradition of the Greek Menippean satire.

## X. *Contemporary satirical writing*

When Ammianus was working on his satirical digressions he did not need to turn for inspiration to authors long dead. Satire was alive and kicking. 'The fourth century after Christ…witnessed the sudden reawakening of interest in the classical writers of satire.'[56] The genre was practised by Christian and pagan authors alike. The former, from Tertullian onward, used the weapon of satire to ridicule the undignified tales of mythology. Jerome's natural aggressiveness honed by his intimate knowledge of the great satirists of the past made him a master of the genre. It is an exciting thought that Ammianus wrote his first digression on Rome at a time when Jerome was a prominent figure in the City. Vices criticized by the classical satirists are attacked by Jerome in his letters and his invectives. I confine myself to one example, a scene worthy of Juvenal. It is a vignette of a rich lady conspicuously distributing alms to the poor, but betraying her cruelty in spite of herself:

> *Vidi nuper—nomen taceo, ne saturam putes—nobilissimam mulierum Romanarum in basilica beati Petri semiviris antecedentibus propria manu, quo religiosior putaretur, singulos nummos dispertire pauperibus…anus quaedam annis pannisque obsita praecurrit ut alterum nummum acciperet; ad quam cum ordine pervenisset, pugnus porrigitur pro denario, et tanti criminis reus sanguis effunditur.*[57]

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[55] 'You must get up early and wait about; meanwhile you are elbowed, you are kept locked out, you are sometimes thought impudent and annoying, you are subordinate to a doorman with a vile Syrian accent and to a Libyan master of ceremonies, and you tip them for remembering your name.'

[56] David S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist. A Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letters* (Ithaca/New York 1964) 3.

[57] *Ep.* 22.32. A wealth of examples is to be found in Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist.* For

In the same satirical vein Greek Christian authors like John Chrysostom and Asterius of Amasea inveighed against the pomp and circumstance of the rich and their display of fine clothes.[58]

In a study of the Menippean tradition in Late Antiquity, Relihan describes Julian's *Caesares* as the work of an author who is influenced both by the Roman Seneca and the Greek Lucian. He distinguishes two lines along which Menippean satire developed, one 'neo-Varronian (encyclopedic and inwardly intellectual) and the Lucianic (outwardly social)'.[59] Both the *Caesares* and Ammianus' digressions clearly belong to the second type, which was the less productive in Late Antiquity, but would re-emerge in the Menippean satires of the Renaissance. Julian's *Caesares* had already been singled out as a pure specimen of Menippean satire by Nesselrath, along with the invectives *In Rufinum* and *In Eutropium* of Ammianus' younger contemporary Claudian.[60] Nesselrath detects traces of Lucian in Claudian, who, like Ammianus, had received a Greek literary education before moving from Alexandria to Rome. He concludes his article with the words 'bei einem solchen Mann wäre es geradezu verwunderlich, wenn er nicht mit der griechischen menippeischen Tradition in Berührung gekommen wäre'. The same might rightfully be said of Lucian's fellow countryman Ammianus.

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other Latin Christian authors, such as Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Ambrose, see Arthur H. Weston, *Latin Satirical Writing Subsequent to Juvenal*', Yale University Thesis (Lancaster, PA 1915).

[58] Both authors are quoted in Valesius' commentary ad 14.6.16.

[59] Joel Relihan, 'Late Arrivals: Julian and Boethius', in: Kirk Freudenburg (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* (Cambridge 2005) 109–122. The quoted words are on p. 112.

[60] Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, 'Menippeisches in der Spätantike. Von Lukian zu Julians *Caesares* und zu Claudians *In Rufinum*', *MH* 51 (1994) 30–44.

*Appendix*

Survey of the contents of the two Roman digressions (corresponding themes are italicized).

14.6 (1300 words)

1 *Prefecture* of Orfitus.
2 Why Ammianus, writing about Rome, has only trivialities to report.
3–6 Lebensaltervergleich.
7–24 *Nobilium instituta.*
7 Lack of respect for their city's greatness.
8 Gilded statues. Example of Cato Maior.
9 *Carriages and garments.*
10 They boast of their riches. Contrast with simplicity of ancestors.
11 Example of Valerius Publicola.
12 Warm reception of foreigner at first visit.
13 *Arrogant treatment next day. Not turning up at dinner is a crime.*
14–15 *Dinner invitations go to people interested in races, gambling, and magic; corrupt nomenclatores.*
16–17 *Mensarum voragines (in praeteritione). Aristocrats and their wives followed by armies of servants, slaves, and eunuchs.* Semiramis.
18 *No respect for erudition.* Libraries closed like tombs. Monstrous musical instruments.
19 Foreigners expelled during famine, chorus-girls allowed to stay.
20 Women dancers performing mimes.
21 In the old days foreigners were treated with respect.
22 Nowadays strangers do not count, unless they are old, childless and rich.
23–24 Fear of contagious diseases. Sick friends are avoided.

28.4 (1600 words)

1–3 *Prefectures* of Olybrius and Ampelius.
2–4 Measures against gluttony not carried through.
6–27 *Nobilitatis errata.*
7 Praenominum claritudo. Pride in family names.
8 *Silk garments. Armies of slaves*
9 Scene in the baths. Behaviour towards prostitutes.
10 *Greeting ceremonies. Arrogance and condescension in dealing with foreigners.*
11 Fascination for horse races.
12 Flatterers praise their luxurious houses.
13 At dinner parties the weight of fish and dormice are noted down by *notarii.*
14–15 *No respect for erudition.* Close reading of Juvenal and Marius Maximus. The example of Socrates.
16 Arbitrariness in punishing slaves.
17 *Not turning up at a dinner is a worse crime than murder.*
18 Outings to the country compared to military expeditions. Fear of heat and sun.
19 After bathing they don their *expensive clothes.*
20 Lack of attention for an old soldier's tale(?)
21 *Only gambling creates real friendships. Presumption of gamblers.*
22 Rich people are pressurized to write their wills. After doing so, they die suddenly(?)
23 Even a humble post fills them with pride.

25–26 *Turba imae sortis et paupertinae. Interested only in taberna, theatrum, alea, aurigae.*

24 They deny heavenly powers, but do nothing without consulting their horoscopes.
25 When they are forced to pay their debts, they turn to *aurigae* for help.
26 Husbands and wives, assisted by lawyers and astrologists, quarrel about wills.
27 Humble when asking for a loan, haughty when it is pay back time.
28–34 *Otiosa plebs.*
28 Pride in family names.
29 *vinum, tesserae, voluptates, Circus Maximus.*
30–31 *They think the well-being of the state depends on the outcome of the races.*
32–33 *At the theatre they expect bribes and demand the expulsion of foreigners. Vulgar yells.*
34 *Gluttony.*

# LA TRAVERSÉE DU DANUBE PAR LES GOTHS : LA SUBVERSION D'UN MODÈLE HÉROÏQUE (AMMIEN MARCELLIN 31.4)

Stéphane Ratti

*Abstract* : In 376 part of the Visigoths crossed the Danube into Roman territory. The typical scene of the hero crossing a river—more particularly the example of Alexander the Great—serves as a foil to this episode. The author argues that in *Res Gestae* 31.4.1–13 Ammianus deliberately modifies this well-known scene in order to portray the Goths collectively as the opposite of the traditional hero. Ammianus' report must be read against the background of the debate at the end of the fourth century between those who advocated accepting the barbarians within the Empire and those who were in favour of closing the borders against them. In order to support the latter position, Ammianus deprives the quasi-heroic feat of the Visigoths of any semblance of heroism.

En 376, si l'on suit la datation fournie par les *Consularia Constantinopolitana*,[1] à l'automne sans doute si l'on en croit Ammien Marcellin,[2] une partie des Visigoths, les Goths Tervinges, incapables de résister à de nouveaux venus sur la scène historique, les Huns, se replient sur le Danube, sous la double conduite de leurs chefs Fritigern et Alavivus.[3] Ils expriment alors à l'empereur Valens une requête pressante : être admis dans le diocèse des Thraces. L'empereur répond favorablement à leur demande et leur accorde le droit de passer le Danube et de venir cultiver des terres en Thrace. C'est alors que les Ostrogoths d'Alatheus et de Safrax expriment le même vœu à Valens. Le refus de ce dernier ne les empêche pas de s'engouffrer dans la brèche et de traverser à leur tour le Danube. Ces événements sont racontés par Ammien Marcellin dans le chapitre 4 de l'ultime livre des *Res Gestae* (31.4.1–13). Ils sont relativement bien attestés dans la mesure où l'on possède le récit parallèle de Zosime (livre 4) et trois fragments d'Eunape (*frg.* 42 et 43, le

[1] *Ad annum* 376.1.

[2] 31.4.5 : *amnem…imbriumque crebritate tunc auctum.*

[3] Je dois exprimer ma plus vive gratitude à Daniël den Hengst et à Guy Sabbah qui ont lu cette étude avant sa publication et m'ont fait part de nombreuses et très suggestives remarques.

premier étant très long; le fragment 45 décrit la traversée à proprement parler) qui lui correspondent. Mon propos n'est pas ici de reconstituer l'histoire de cette période ni d'en faire une nouvelle fois le récit.[4]

## I. *Des barbares dans l'Empire: philanthropie ou folie?*

Je voudrais plutôt souligner, tout d'abord, combien l'épisode est crucial pour l'histoire des idées et des mentalités de la fin du quatrième siècle. Alors que le monde méditerranéen était perçu jusque-là comme une entité orientée Est/Ouest,[5] l'intrusion des Huns dans l'histoire, après qu'ils ont franchi le bosphore cimmérien (Zosime 4.20.3), marque un changement d'axe. L'intégration des Goths d'Alavivus et de Fritigern avec le statut de ‹colons déditices› au cœur de l'Empire et non plus dans des provinces éloignées des frontières est apparu aux yeux des contemporains comme un fait inouï.[6] Dès lors, le mouvement d'intégration plus ou moins pacifique des barbares dans l'Empire méditerranéen ne s'arrêtera plus. Théodose signera en 382 un traité avec le successeur d'Athanaric qui accordera aux Goths un statut de soldats fédérés et amis.[7] L'Europe en formation ne se fait plus selon un axe Est/Ouest mais bien avec les envahisseurs du Nord. Ce mouvement, l'opinion contemporaine le vit comme une conséquence de la défaite de 378, alors que, on l'a vu, il a débuté en 376. Andrinople deviendra désormais comme le symbole de la fin d'un monde, la mort même de l'Empire. Ce n'est pas par hasard si Jérôme achève sa *Chronique* à cette date, alors même que, dit-il, les barbares sont partout. Les derniers mots de sa Préface, rédigés en 382, sont éclairants: *Quo fine contentus reliquum temporis Gratiani et Theodosii latioris historiae stilo reservavi, non quo de viventibus timuerim libere et vere scribere—timor enim Domini hominum timorem expellit—, sed quoniam debacchantibus adhuc in terra nostra barbaris incerta sunt omnia.*[8]

[4] Il a été fort bien fait par Ernest Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. 1 (Paris 1949) 188–189. Cf., en dernier lieu, Paul Veyne, ‹La prise de Rome en 410 et les Grandes Invasions›, dans: Idem, *L'Empire gréco-romain* (Paris 2005) 713–747, ici 716–719.

[5] Selon la vision que privilégiait Pline l'Ancien lorsqu'il faisait de l'Océan pénétrant la Méditerranée d'Ouest en Est le ciseau qui découpait les côtes et partageait le monde en trois continents (Europe, Afrique, Asie); cf. mon étude ‹L'Europe est-elle née dans l'Antiquité?›, *Anabases* 1 (2005) 193–211.

[6] Cf. Émilienne Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares* II.1 (Paris 1969) 139.

[7] Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe*, 151.

[8] Hicr. *Chron.* p. 7 Helm.

‹Me contentant de ce terme [378], j'ai laissé les époques restantes de Gratien et de Théodose à un genre d'histoire plus élevé. Non que j'ai craint d'écrire franchement la vérité sur les vivants—car la crainte du Seigneur chasse la crainte des hommes—, mais parce qu'avec les barbares qui se déchaînent encore sur notre terre comme des bacchantes, tout n'est qu'incertitude› (ma traduction).

Les dernières années du quatrième siècle voient alors naître et croître un vrai sentiment patriotique romain par réaction aux progrès des barbares dans l'Empire.[9] Une partie de l'opinion fait de la politique de Valens et notamment de sa décision d'autoriser les Visigoths à traverser le Danube la cause initiale d'un mouvement que personne ne peut plus entraver. Le développement d'un patriotisme romain sur la défensive gagne à la fois le camp des païens et celui des chrétiens. Il est ainsi illustré essentiellement par des œuvres d'inspiration païenne mais aussi par des témoignages chrétiens: Ammien Marcellin et l'auteur de l'*Histoire Auguste* appartiennent au camp des premiers, Jérôme et Orose au camp des seconds.

Il faut relire à cet égard la notice des *Consularia Constantinopolitana* qui mentionne la traversée du Danube par les Goths sur décision de Valens: *Victi et expulsi sunt Gothi a gente Vnorum et suscepti sunt in Romania pro misericordia iussione Aug. Valentis* (*anno* 376). Dans l'esprit du rédacteur des *Consularia Constantinopolitana* il y a bien deux mondes, la *Romania* et ce qui lui est extérieur, les ténèbres du *barbaricum*. Il est remarquable que les Goths soient perçus comme des victimes, chassés (*expulsi*) de leurs terres par de nouveaux bourreaux, les Huns, plus terribles que les barbares ordinaires de l'histoire. Écrite avant 388,[10] la notice des *Consularia Constantinopolitana* enregistre comme un fait acquis la paix de 382 entre Théodose et les Goths. Elle porte surtout trace du christianisme de son rédacteur dans la mention de la *misericordia* de Valens, soucieux de porter secours à un peuple converti à l'arianisme par les œuvres d'Ulfilas. Les nouveaux barbares, les Huns, demeureront quant à eux en dehors de la révélation. L'interprétation qu'il convient de donner à l'épisode de la traversée du Danube par les Goths divise non seulement les partisans de Valens et les opposants à sa politique, mais aussi les chrétiens et les païens. Les premiers voient dans les nouveaux arrivants des coreligionnaires persécutés, les seconds un danger pour l'intégrité de l'Empire. Ammien Marcellin doit naturellement être placé dans le

[9] Pierre Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques* (Paris 1964) 23–24.
[10] MGH AA 9.1 Mommsen p. 242.

second camp. Son hostilité à l'argument humanitaire de la *misericordia Valentis* se lit dans l'ironie féroce du trait par lequel il transcrit la supplique du roi des Greuthunges, Vitheric: *ut simili susciperetur humanitate obsecravit* (31.4.12). L'opposition est nette avec la notice des *Consularia Constantinopolitana*: là où l'auteur chrétien de la liste consulaire voit de la *misericordia*, le païen Ammien ne relève que l'hypocrisie rhétorique du Goth. En marquant farouchement son opposition à une politique d'assimilation menée au nom de l'*humanitas*, Ammien Marcellin rompt avec un processus historique amorcé depuis plusieurs siècles, peut-être même depuis César et les empereurs du premier siècle.[11] Sans doute aussi l'auteur des *Res Gestae* entretient-il sur ce sujet une polémique avec Thémistios et ses amis. Le rhéteur célèbre à plusieurs reprises la vertu de ‹philanthropie›,[12] proche de l'*humanitas*. Dans son discours 16, daté du 1er janvier 383, il célèbre la paix scellée par Théodose avec les Goths au nom de la Φιλανθρωπία: δόγου γὰρ καὶ Φιλανθρωπίας αἱ νῖκαι τοιδῦται.[13] Or on sait que, pour Ammien, l'une des seules réponses possibles à l'avancée des barbares réside dans l'usage d'une férocité supérieure à leur propre férocité: c'est ce que veut sans doute prouver l'épisode frappant du soldat sarrasin fédéré qui boit le sang de sa victime gothe sous les remparts de Constantinople et parvient ainsi à faire reculer les assaillants (31.16.6).

## II. *La traversée du fleuve: un modèle héroïque traditionnel*

Dans ce contexte, il nous faut à présent proposer une lecture du chapitre 4 du livre 31 qui tente de révéler non les intentions d'Ammien—son hostilité à la politique de Valens ne se discute pas—mais les moyens littéraires et allégoriques qu'il met au service de sa démonstration.

Il ne fait tout d'abord aucun doute que c'est une décision de l'empereur qui est à l'origine de tout: *permissu imperatoris transeundi Danubium copiam…adepti* (31.4.5). Des mots qui signifient la décision intime de l'empereur puis l'ordre donné. On retrouve ces deux étapes dans

[11] Cf., par exemple, l'interprétation que donne Pierre Gros de Vitruve 2.8.11 (à propos de la fontaine d'Halicarnasse et du passage *humanitatis dulcedine mollitis animis barbarorum*): ‹Le Barbare humanisé ou les limites de l'*humanitas*›, dans: Clara Auvray-Assayas (éd.), *Images romaines* (Paris 1998) 143–159.

[12] Cf. Them. *Or.* 1: Περὶ φιλανθρωπίας ἢ Κωνστάντιος.

[13] Them. *Or.* 16, p. 301, l. 21–22 Schenkl-Downey. Cf. aussi Them. *Or.* 19 (daté de 384 ou 386): Ἐπὶ τῇ φιλανθρωπίᾳ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Θεοδοσίου.

le récit d'Eunape : ἔδοξε τῷ βασιλεῖ et δεχθῆναι κελεύει τοὺς ἄνδρας (*frg.* 42, p. 31 Müller). Le fait ne souffre donc historiquement aucune contestation. À partir de là Ammien va échafauder un récit dont la tonalité lui est personnelle, sans plus aucune convergence avec la version eunapienne—ni, a fortiori, avec la version de Zosime—et qui fait des Romains les artisans de leur propre perte. L'historien latin va donner à l'événement une connotation tragique, absente des deux historiens grecs. L'aveuglement des Romains et de Valens en particulier est souligné par des traits féroces qui ressortissent exactement à l'ironie tragique. Comme dans le mythe, c'est avec une joie inconsciente que les Romains accueillent chez eux les Goths tels des Grecs dissimulés dans un nouveau cheval de Troie : *negotium laetitiae fuit potius quam timori* (31.4.4). Comme dans la tragédie, les espoirs des protagonistes vont se révéler fallacieux, la réalité prenant un tour opposé aux vœux de chacun : *hacque spe mittuntur diversi qui, cum vehiculis, plebem transferant truculentam* (31.4.5). Au lieu d'une armée invincible (*invictum exercitum*) mise au service de l'Empire, c'est une armée qui, moins de deux ans plus tard, à Andrinople, lui infligera une défaite cinglante que Valens fait entrer sur son territoire. Comme dans les oracles hérodotéens délivrés à Crésus, le jeu sémantique porte sur le sens de l'adjectif *invictum*. L'ironie tragique se lit encore dans le soin méticuleux que mettent les Romains à ménager leur propre ruine : *et navabatur opera diligens ne qui Romanam rem eversurus derelinqueretur* (31.4.5). Comme Œdipe, l'Empire va au-devant de sa perte croyant échapper à son destin, s'y précipitant avec un empressement qui ne peut que provoquer terreur et pitié dans l'esprit du lecteur d'Ammien (31.4.6 : *ita turbido instantium studio orbis Romani pernicies ducebatur*), qui, lui, connaît l'issue fatale. Ce jeu sur des motifs littéraires, sur des structures narratives bien connues, appartient en propre à Ammien et ne se retrouve ni chez Eunape ni chez Zosime. La traversée des Goths, acceptée par Valens, organisée avec soin par sa volonté, est présentée de manière orientée par Ammien comme un suicide inconscient de la puissance romaine, conduite par un Valens aveuglé par quelque puissance divine hostile (31.4.9 : *quasi laevo quodam numine deligente*).

En acceptant de faire traverser les Goths, Rome commet un suicide. À cet égard, il faut à présent mettre en évidence la valeur symbolique forte que revêt la traversée du fleuve. Ce thème irrigue de nombreux récits antiques, au delà même du genre historiographique. Des travaux de mythologie comparée ont ces dernières années démontré sans équivoque possible que le franchissement d'un fleuve valait épreuve qualifiante pour un héros. Un schème récurrent a ainsi pu être mis en

évidence : le souverain légitime s'affirme comme tel en triomphant de l'obstacle liquide tandis que l'usurpateur découvre dans son échec son illégitimité. L'exemple le plus frappant est sans doute le récit par Hérodote de la prise de Babylone par Cyrus à la suite de la victoire du Grand Roi sur les eaux du Gyndès (Hérodote 1.189). Dominique Briquel, dans la continuité des travaux de Georges Dumézil, a notamment mis en évidence les parallèles de structure dans le traitement de ce thème chez Hérodote et celui de la prise de Véies par les Romains à la suite d'une montée soudaine des eaux du lac Albain.[14] La piste a été suivie par d'autres, par Jean-Luc Desnier notamment, qui a fait du passage du fleuve un élément récurrent de l'héritage culturel indo-européen dans les récits historiographiques grecs et latins.[15] De Xerxès à Lucullus en passant par Alexandre, les souverains se sont un jour trouvés en position d'ordalie face aux berges d'un fleuve qui allait soit les arrêter soit leur ouvrir les portes de la gloire. Les empereurs romains ne demeurent pas à l'extérieur de ce schéma et on sait aujourd'hui mieux repérer dans les textes les significations religieuses ou idéologiques parfois jusque-là négligées de passages pourtant fameux. Il se pourrait bien que Virgile lui-même eût été influencé par cette topique lorsqu'il fait de la traversée de l'Amasenus en crue l'épreuve décisive qui transforme un nouveau né en vierge guerrière : n'est-ce pas là la signification profonde du récit de l'enfance de Camille, au chant 11 de l'*Énéide*, projetée par-dessus l'obstacle par l'astuce de son père Métabus ? C'est en tout cas ce que j'ai voulu mettre en lumière dans une étude récente qui souligne toute la symbolique religieuse d'une aristie centrale dans le parcours d'une jeune fille devenue une Amazone au prix du sacrifice de sa fécondité.[16]

On peut encore citer la traversée de la baie de Naples par Caligula sur son cheval telle que la décrit Suétone (*Cal.* 19) et telle que l'a bien éclairée récemment Michel Dubuisson :[17] la cérémonie n'a rien du geste d'un fou ; elle s'explique par des motifs religieux, empruntés au fonds iranien, et vise à impressionner les otages parthes présents

[14] Dominique Briquel, ‹Sur un passage d'Hérodote : prise de Babylone et prise de Véies›, *BAGB* (1981) 293–306.

[15] Jean-Luc Desnier, *Le passage du fleuve. Essai sur la légitimité du souverain* (Paris 1995).

[16] ‹Le sens du sacrifice de Camille dans l'*Énéide* (11, 539–566)›, *Hermes* 134, 4 (2006) 407–418.

[17] Michel Dubuisson, ‹Suétone et la fausse impartialité de l'érudit›, dans : Guy Lachenaud, Dominique Longrée (éds.), *Grecs et Romains aux prises avec l'histoire. Représentations, récits et idéologie* (Rennes 2003) 249–261.

en faisant de Caligula l'égal d'un dieu capable de se rendre maître de l'élément liquide. On peut aussi songer aux sources historiographiques latines de la fin du quatrième siècle, Aurélius Victor (38.2–4), Eutrope (9.18.1) ou encore Festus (24.2) et l'auteur de la *Vita Cari* dans l'*Histoire Auguste* (*Car.* 8.1–7 et 9.1), passages dans lesquels la divinité semble se venger de l'*hubris* de l'empereur Carus qui a inconsidérément franchi le Tigre.[18] Ces auteurs subissent sans doute, dans l'élaboration de leur propre schéma, l'influence de Tite-Live. Chez ce dernier en effet le franchissement d'un fleuve très large (la Medjerda?) qualifie Massinissa comme un vrai souverain et sert de prélude non seulement à la reconquête de son propre royaume après que les Mésules l'eurent reconnu comme leur chef mais aussi à la prise du royaume des Masésyles, celui de son rival Syphax (Tite-Live 29.32).

Ammien Marcellin lui-même n'ignore pas la valeur probante que revêt la traversée réussie d'un fleuve. J'ai ainsi cru pouvoir montrer que l'épisode d'Horatius Coclès au livre 2 de Tite-Live avait inspiré un épisode de la vaste fresque de la bataille de Strasbourg au cours de laquelle Julien s'oppose personnellement à l'avancée des Germains exactement comme le borgne avait interdit aux assaillants la traversée du Tibre et donc la souveraineté sur Rome.[19] Lorsqu'Ammien insiste sur les mérites des soldats de Julien qui réussissent à franchir le Tigre en 363—en comparant leur exploit à celui de Sertorius qui parvint tout armé à traverser le Rhône à la nage pour échapper aux Germains[20]—, c'est moins pour rendre hommage à Plutarque, derrière lequel se dis-

[18] Cf. *Car.* 9.1: *plerique dicunt uim fati quamdam esse ut Romanus princeps Ctesiphontem transire non possit, ideoque Carum fulmine absumptum quod eos fines transgredi cuperet qui fataliter constituti sunt.* Si le biographe ne mentionne pas le Tigre, la cité de Ctésiphon désigne néanmoins sans ambiguïté la limite du fleuve. Mais l'auteur de l'*Histoire Auguste* se démarque de la tradition issue de la *Kaisergeschichte* en ce qu'il ne croit pas en l'interdit religieux: cf. François Paschoud, *Histoire Auguste* V 2 (Paris 2001) 359–360.

[19] Cf. mon étude ‹Le récit de la bataille de Strasbourg par Ammien Marcellin: un modèle livien?›, dans: Madeleine Piot (éd.), *Regards sur le monde antique. Hommages à Guy Sabbah* (Lyon 2002) 257–264. Une preuve éclatante qu'Ammien avait parfaitement à l'esprit le livre 2 de Tite-Live m'avait échappé au moment où je rédigeais mon étude. Elle figure en Ammien 31.13.4 où l'historien décrit un soldat goth blessé: *minaciter circumferentem oculos truces*, ce qui est le calque de Tite-Live 2.10.8: *circumferens inde truces minaciter oculos*. On ne saurait trouver confirmation plus sûre de ma démonstration de 2002 et de la prégnance du modèle livien sur l'œuvre d'Ammien, le livre 31 en particulier. Noter encore que *precibus et obtestatione* en Ammien 31.4.4 fait irrésistiblement penser à Tite-Live 8.35.1: *ad preces et obtestationem versus* et Tite-Live 27.50.5: *matronae …in preces obtestationesque versae*; cf. aussi à nouveau Apulée, *Met.* 10.26: *sed aegre precibus et obtestationibus eius multum ac diu fatigata tandem abire concessit.*

[20] 24.6.7.

simule peut-être l'influence de Tite-Live, que pour inscrire l'expédition de son héros dans une dynamique de la victoire que seule une mort accidentelle—peut-être une trahison—empêchera de trouver son aboutissement prévisible dans la prise de Ctésiphon. Les abréviateurs latins se souviendront que la traversée du Tigre sous les flèches des Perses valait qualification héroïque lorsqu'ils écriront sans vergogne que le conquérant avait été frappé par une lance inconnue au moment même où il rentrait victorieux : *remeans victor*.[21]

La figure héroïque qui se dessine en arrière plan de tous ces épisodes est naturellement celle d'Alexandre. La *Vie d'Alexandre* par Plutarque contient le célèbre épisode de la source de Xanthos (*Alex*. 17.4–6) rejetant une tablette qui se révèle annoncer la chute de l'empire des Perses ; cet oracle est suivi immédiatement dans le récit par le prodige de la mer qui se retire le long du rivage de Pamphylie au passage d'Alexandre. Mais c'est surtout—ce n'est pas un hasard—au quatrième siècle que les récits du corpus alexandrin feront de la traversée d'un fleuve un *omen* de souveraineté. On trouve ainsi dans les *Res Gestae Alexandri* par Julius Valère le récit détaillé des circonstances au cours desquelles Alexandre rencontre Darius (2.14), fut conduit au palais royal et y banqueta. Cette prise de possession symbolique du royaume ennemi se fait grâce à la qualification que procure dans les lignes qui précèdent le franchissement du fleuve Stranga rendu praticable par le gel.[22] La nature se plie ainsi aux visées militaires d'Alexandre. C'est cette façon qu'ont les éléments de seconder les projets du conquérant que dévoile le jeu étymologique entre *Stranga* et *stringitur* subtilement mis en place par l'auteur des *Res Gestae Alexandri*. Un autre épisode met de même en scène les qualités exemplaires du souverain. Il s'agit cette fois de l'*Itinerarium Alexandri*. À Tarse, Alexandre, pour se rafraîchir, plonge du haut d'un pont dans le Cydnus et traverse le fleuve dans toute sa largeur avec bouclier, cuirasse, casque et lance.[23] Sans doute faut-il ici se souvenir du rêve caressé par Alexandre de disparaître englouti dans l'Euphrate afin de connaître une issue digne d'un dieu et de faire croire à son

[21] Eutr. 10.16.2.

[22] Iul. Val. 2.14.673–679 Rosellini : *igitur cum ad Strangam fluvium devenisset, qui plerumque ex vehementia nivium adeo stringitur et congelascit ut instar saxi viabilem sese transeuntibus viris, carris etiam quam onustissimis praebeat, atque ex hoc ingenio sui tunc gradabilis foret…iter agit.*

[23] *Itinerarium* 28.176–183 Tabacco : *delectatusque tali elemento seu fluenti victus aestu ac desiderans frigoris, an ut fortitudinem sui intuentium civium theatro iactaret, saltu pontem fluminis scandit una clipeo loricaque vel telo cum casside inque amnem sese trans latus alacri saltu praecipitat eiusque omnem retentans arma latitudinem natat.*

immortalité.[24] L'auteur de l'*Itinerarium* ne l'a pas compris ou n'a pas voulu souligner cet aspect. Il préfère faire de la traversée du fleuve une épreuve qualifiant Alexandre comme *exemplum*, comme modèle d'*ars regia*.[25] Relevons enfin un détail d'importance. L'exploit d'Alexandre à Tarse est accompli avec toutes ses armes, défensives et offensives dans les versions de l'*Itinerarium* et des *Res Gestae Alexandri*;[26] en revanche, dans le modèle grec du pseudo-Callisthène traduit par Julius Valère le héros s'est dépouillé de ses armes: ἀποδυσάμενος ἐνήλατο εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν.[27] Le motif du guerrier tout armé apparaît comme spécifiquement romain.[28]

On sait encore parfaitement combien la geste d'Alexandre a influencé le portrait que donnent de Julien les livres 23–25 des *Res Gestae* d'Ammien Marcellin. À plusieurs reprises Ammien compare son héros au macédonien[29] dont l'ombre plane sur toute la triade persique.[30] Julien lui-même ne dissimule pas sa fascination pour un héros qu'il a rêvé d'imiter. Il le convoque au banquet des Césars, seul mortel qui n'est ni romain ni empereur à y être admis, et il met dans la bouche de Quirinus un éloge flatteur du conquérant[31] qu'il fait asseoir à la place de Caracalla, chassé du banquet pour fratricide. Il est ainsi très net que

[24] Cf. *De morte testamentoque Alexandri Magni liber* 102 Thomas; à Roxane qui l'a empêché de se jeter dans le fleuve Alexandre répond: *‹o Rhoxane, parvum fructum cum tibi largiris, mihi inmortalitatem ademisti›*.

[25] *Itinerarium* 28.183–184 Tabacco: *ita inter artes est regias fortitudinis formam ex se militi dare, qui sese iactaverint.*

[26] Iul. Val. 2.8.465 Rosellini: *una cum armis ⟨sese⟩ praecipitat e ponte ac natabundus exit.*

[27] Pseudo-Callisthène 2.8.1, p. 74, 5 Kroll.

[28] On sait ainsi que, alors que la statuaire grecque représentait ses héros nus, les Romains les habillaient d'une cuirasse; cf. Pline l'Ancien 34.18: *Graeca res nihil velare, at contra Romana ac militaris thoraces addere.*

[29] 24.4.27; 25.4.15.

[30] Le nom d'Alexandre est cité à quatre reprises dans le seul livre 23: 23.6.2; 23.6.3; 23.6.8; 23.6.22. On a pu remarquer que dans son discours aux soldats au début de l'expédition perse (sur ce passage, cf. Stéphane Ratti, ‹Julien soldat, antiquaire et dévot. Ammien Marcellin 23.5.15–24›, *Vita Latina* 163 [2001] 18–27) Julien ne cite pas nommément Alexandre. Il s'agit d'un effet de la volonté d'Ammien de romaniser la figure Alexandre: cf. J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII* (Groningen 1998) 111. Sur l'importante présence d'Alexandre dans les *Res Gestae*, cf. Jacques Fontaine, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome I, Livres XIV–XVI* (Paris 1968) 228 n. 137.

[31] *Les Césars* 16 c: ‹Pour lui, il est vrai, mes descendants éprouvent tant d'admiration que, de tous les capitaines étrangers, c'est le seul qu'ils appellent et jugent grand› (trad. Christian Lacombrade).

dans la seconde moitié du quatrième siècle s'était opérée une romanisation d'Alexandre, ou plus exactement une lecture de sa vie et de son règne selon des critères idéologiques romains.[32]

## III. *Le modèle héroïque subverti par Ammien*

N'insistons pas davantage. On l'aura compris, c'est ce modèle héroïque du passage du fleuve qui sert de toile de fond à notre épisode du Danube. Je voudrais montrer que ce n'est pas une source historiographique unique qui se profile derrière le récit d'Ammien mais plutôt que l'auteur des *Res Gestae* détourne sciemment et méthodiquement un schéma structurel bien connu afin de faire du peuple goth, collectivement, une figure antithétique du héros traditionnel. La traversée du Danube se fait dans des conditions telles qu'elle disqualifie toute prétention de leur part au moindre mérite. Ammien inscrit son récit dans la polémique qui, à la fin du quatrième siècle, sous Théodose, opposait partisans de l'intégration des barbares et ceux qui prônaient la fermeture des frontières. Afin de défendre cette dernière position, Ammien veut ôter tout caractère héroïque à la pseudo-aristie des Visigoths. Examinons donc les détails de cette traversée telle que la raconte Ammien.

Un premier point doit être relevé : le silence d'Ammien sur les liens qui existaient entre Fritigern, chef des Goths Tervinges, et Valens. L'historien latin semble faire d'Alavivus, toujours nommé seul—ou avant Fritigern comme en 31.4.8—, le vrai chef de cette partie des Goths. La raison semble être la volonté de minimiser les motifs religieux de convergence entre les Romains et les Goths. Il est bien établi en effet que Valens avait soutenu Fritigern dans sa lutte interne contre Athanaric, sans doute en échange de sa conversion à l'arianisme parfaitement attestée par le récit de Socrate (*HE* 4.32). La conversion d'une partie des Goths par l'action d'Ulfilas date sans doute de vingt ou trente ans plus tôt, sous Constance II,[33] et celle de Fritigern des années 370–375.[34] Ammien sous-estime, néglige même les questions religieuses,

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[32] Cf. la thèse de doctorat inédite d'Ingrid Brenez, *Julius Valerius et le corpus alexandrin du IVe siècle* (Université de Metz 2003) 889–903.

[33] Cf. André Piganiol, *L'Empire chrétien* (Paris 1947) 85.

[34] Cf. Socr. *HE* 4.33. Noel Lenski, ‹The Gothic Civil War and the Date of the Gothic Conversion›, *GRBS* 36 (1995) 51–87, considère la datation fournie par Socrate (entre 370 et 375) comme exacte ; cf. *contra* Peter J. Heather, ‹The Crossing of the

d'autant plus volontiers qu'en l'occurrence elles soulignent des convergences entre barbares et Romains qu'il préfère taire.

Les rives du Danube paraissent d'emblée constituer une vraie frontière aux yeux d'Ammien : *ripas occupavere* (31.4.1). Il est clair que pour l'historien l'Ister a vocation à constituer une frontière infranchissable. Au livre 17 des *Res Gestae* il avait reconnu à Constance II le mérite, en 358–359, d'une action salutaire contre les Sarmates Limigantes, repoussés fermement au delà du fleuve et de son affluent, le Parthiscus. La confluence des deux fleuves constitue un rempart naturel dont Ammien vante l'efficacité : *has enim terras Parthiscus inruens obliquatis meatibus, Histro miscetur ; sed dum solus licentius fluit, spatia longa et lata sensim praeterlabens, et ea coartans prope exitum in angustias, accolas ab impetu Romanorum alveo Danubii defendit, a barbaricis vero excursibus suo tutos praestat obstaculo* (17.13.4). En signalant que les Visigoths s'arrêtent sur ses rives, contraints et forcés, Ammien souligne toute la force de l'obstacle (*obstaculum*) que constitue le Danube. Au delà, comme l'avait déjà écrit Jérôme dans la conclusion de la *Chronique* (cf. *supra*), les barbares ‹divaguent› (31.4.2 : *vagari*), condamnés à l'errance (*disseminantes*) par une frontière hermétique. Le verbe *vagari* s'applique presque toujours chez Ammien à l'état de nature sauvage, que ce soit à des animaux[35] ou à des barbares sans culture.[36] Le Danube marque ainsi la limite entre le monde des bêtes et celui de la civilisation. Il ne saurait être franchi ; on n'aurait garde de laisser ces peuples s'installer *citra flumen* (31.4.4) sans risque.

La manière elle-même dont se fait la traversée suggère le peu d'héroïsme qu'il y eut de la part des Goths en l'occurrence. Ils n'ont aucune initiative ; aucun verbe dans notre passage n'a les Goths pour sujet. Ces derniers ne sont que l'objet passif de toutes les attentions de la part des Romains, aux commandes de la manœuvre : *mittuntur diversi qui, cum vehiculis, plebem transferant truculentam* (31.4.5). La longue litanie hallucinante de ces malheureux transférés nuit et jour avec femmes, enfants et bagages semble comme un cauchemar qui hante l'imagination de l'historien, impuissant face au déferlement barbare: *transfretabantur in dies et noctes* (31.4.5). Les Romains opèrent ce transfert, les Goths le subissent (31.4.11 : *traducti*) : où réside le mérite guerrier des seconds ? Tout comme les Troyens avaient ouvert les portes de leur cité aux Grecs dissimu-

Danube and the Gothic Conversion›, *GRBS* 27 (1986) 289–318 qui, se fondant sur Socrate, Sozomène et Eunape, date cette conversion de 376.

[35] 18.7.5 : *leones vagantur.*

[36] 27.4.10 : *gentes…vagantes sine cultu vel legibus.*

lés dans leur cheval, les Romains lèvent d'eux-mêmes les barrières qui protégeaient leur frontière : *nostri limitis reseratis obicibus* (31.4.9). L'image du verrou qui saute est celle-là même qu'avait utilisée Ammien pour souligner *a contrario* la vraie vaillance d'un Julien qui, au cours de la bataille de Strasbourg, en 357, avait par son autorité seule fait barrage à ses troupes, qui avaient entamé un mouvement de repli, à la manière d'une barrière infranchissable : *velut repagulum quoddam* (16.12.38). Je crois avoir montré ailleurs ce que cette image du ‹ verrou › devait à Tite-Live, plus précisément à l'aristie d'Horatius Coclès fermant le pont Sublicius à l'assaut des ennemis (2.10.4).[37] L'image du Danube comme un verrou se transforme peu à peu en une métaphore de la digue. Le déferlement des barbares est celui d'un flot que ne contient plus aucune berge. Les mots *per provincias circumfusae pandentesque se in spatia ampla camporum* (31.4.8) suggèrent l'image d'un raz-de-marée[38]—ce que ne rendent pas toutes les traductions existantes d'Ammien : ‹ ils débordèrent dans les provinces et se déversèrent dans les vastes espaces des plaines ›. C'est ainsi que doit se comprendre la suite immédiate avec la mention des sommets eux-mêmes qui n'échappent pas à l'inondation : *regiones omnes et cuncta opplevere montium iuga* (‹ ils remplirent toutes les régions et recouvrirent toutes les cimes des montagnes ›). À cette image empruntée au monde liquide se superpose encore la référence au feu. Cette fois c'est l'Etna virgilien[39] qui fournit le point de comparaison avec la *barbaria* qui diffuse ses flammes (31.4.9 : *ut Aetnaeas favillas armatorum agmina diffundente barbaria*). On le constate, les cataclysmes de toutes espèces sont convoqués par Ammien pour tenter de donner sa vraie portée à l'envahissement gothique.

La rage impuissante d'Ammien qui revit à plusieurs années d'écart ce sombre épisode se lit dans l'ironie amère avec laquelle il colore son récit. Loin des exploits des hommes de Julien traversant le Tigre accrochés à des outres gonflées, les Goths usent de moyens à la fois confortables et indignes, énumérés dans un decrescendo (ou un crescendo

[37] Ratti, ‹ Le récit de la bataille de Strasbourg ›.

[38] Pour un sens proche de *circumfundere*, cf. Ammien 14.2.9 à propos du fleuve Mélas : *Melas pro muro tuetur accolas circumfusus* ; pour un sens proche de *pandere*, cf. Ammien 29.6.17 à propos d'une crue du Tibre : *Tiberis…supra amnis speciem pansus*. Sur le symbolisme des éléments dans l'œuvre d'Ammien, cf. Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae (Paris 1978) 558–562.

[39] Cf. la description de l'Etna dans *L'Énéide* 3.573 : *turbine fumantem piceo et candente favilla*.

grotesque) savoureux : *navibus ratibusque et cavatis arborum alveis* (31.4.5). Il n'est pas jusqu'à l'adverbe final qui ne participe à cette mise en scène de la dérision : *agminatim inpositi*. Ces Goths là constituent-ils réellement, dans le désordre de ces noires journées, une armée redoutable ? Sans doute pas autant qu'on l'a cru à l'époque et qu'on semble encore le croire aujourd'hui. En effet *agminatim* ne signifie pas embarqués ‹à la file› (traduction française dans la CUF), rangés en ordre de bataille, contrairement à ce que le rapprochement spontané avec *agmen* laisse à penser. L'adverbe est peu utilisé en latin. Je n'en ai trouvé que trois emplois, l'un chez Solin (25.4) et deux dans les *Métamorphoses* d'Apulée, tous deux au livre 4 qui rapporte les histoires des brigands. Ces derniers festoient sans retenue : *estur ac potatur incondite, pulmentis aceruatim, panibus aggeratim, poculis agminatim ingestis* (4.8.4) (‹On mange et on boit dans le plus grand désordre ; on engloutit des viandes par monceaux, des pains sans compter et des coupes les unes sur les autres› ; ma traduction). Le registre utilisé est celui de la bestialité ainsi que le confirme la comparaison qui suit entre le festin des brigands et celui des Centaures et des Lapithes : *ac iam cetera semiferis Lapithisque similia* (4.8.5 ‹et en tout désormais semblables aux monstres à moitié bêtes et aux Lapithes›). Le second emploi que fait Apulée de l'adverbe *agminatim* est encore plus probant. Thrasyléon est poursuivi par la meute féroce des chiens que les brigands ont jetés sur lui : *cuncti canes de proximo angiportu satis feri satisque copiosi venaticis illis, qui commodum domo similiter insequentes processerant, se ommiscent agminatim* (4.20.4). *Ommiscent*, donné par l'édition de la CUF,[40] est un hapax. Mais le sens est clair : les chiens du voisinage et ceux des brigands se mêlent ‹en meute› (ma traduction pour *agminatim*) pour poursuivre leur malheureuse victime. Dans les deux cas, chez Apulée, *agminatim* relève du registre de la bestialité.

Or ce sens est parfaitement confirmé par les emplois que fait du mot Ammien lui-même, qu'il l'ait emprunté à Apulée ou à Virgile qui, déjà, avait appliqué *agmen* aux colonnes de fourmis.[41] En dehors de notre passage *agminatim* apparaît encore deux fois dans les *Res Gestae*. Dans sa description du golfe pontique l'historien évoque la migration des poissons qui quittent la Méditerranée pour frayer dans le Pont : *ab ultimis nostri finibus maris agminatim ad hunc secessum pariendi gra-*

[40] D.S. Robertson, Louis Callebat (Paris 1992).

[41] Cf. *A.* 4.404 : *it nigrum campis agmen*, hémistiche cité également par Sénèque, *Nat.* 1 *praef.* 10.

*tia petere pisces* (22.8.47). Rien de guerrier dans cette migration de ‹bancs entiers› (*agminatim*) de poissons. Le second emploi du terme a un rapport étroit, on va le voir, avec notre passage. Au livre 18, Ammien décrit l'armée du roi des Chionites Grumbatès et fait profession de vérité[42] en expliquant que les informations qu'il fournit sont dignes de foi (18.6.23). Il s'oppose alors aux traditions plus ou moins légendaires qui décrivent l'importante armée réunie jadis par Xerxès à Doriscos : *Quo usque nobis Doriscum Thraciae oppidum, et agminatim intra consaepta exercitus recensitos, Graecia fabulosa, narrabis?* Sans doute Ammien cherche-t-il ici à convaincre son lecteur que ses informations sont plus fiables que celles que l'on trouve dans la tradition hérodotéenne. *Agminatim* a été rendu de manière inexacte par la traduction de la CUF : ‹Jusques à quand, Grèce éprise de légendes, nous conteras-tu qu'à Doriscos, la place de Thrace, on recensa les armées en les enfermant par bataillons dans des enclos ?› En réalité les enclos en question (*saepta*) ne sont pas ceux qui servaient, au Champ de Mars, à regrouper les votants lors des comices tributes.[43] Ces *saepta* sont en fait l'équivalent de *praesepia*, des parcs à bestiaux.[44] Ce sens de *saepta* est d'ailleurs bien connu déjà de Cicéron qui l'emploie dans les *Philippiques*[45] et d'Ammien lui-même au livre 31.[46] Dans les *Res Gestae* 18.6.23, *agminatim intra consaepta exercitus* signifie donc : ‹des armées rangées à la manière de troupeaux dans des enclos›.

Il n'y a donc pas de place pour le doute : les Goths entassés sur leurs embarcations dérisoires sont assimilés à des troupeaux d'animaux sans aucune dignité et *agminatim inpositi* peut être rendu par ‹embarqués comme des bêtes›. Sans conteste les troupes de Xerxès rangées *turmatim* à Doriscos (31.4.7) constituaient-elles pour les Grecs, aux temps de la seconde guerre Médique, une menace autrement redoutable. La leçon délivrée par Ammien est claire : il s'agit de ne pas confondre les époques ni les chefs car les Goths ne sont pas les Perses et Valens n'est pas Thémistocle.

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[42] Cf. 27.4.2 et 31.16.9 : *opus veritatem professus*.

[43] Cf. Cic. *Att.* 4.17.7 : *in campo Martio saepta tributis comitiis marmorea sumus et tecta facturi eaque cingemus excelsa porticu*.

[44] Cf. Var. *R.* 1.13.6 ; Alfred Ernout, Alfred Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots* (Paris 2001 [1932]) 588, s.v. *saepes*.

[45] Cf. *Phil.* 13.5 : *quibus saeptis tam immanes beluas continebimus?*.

[46] Cf. 31.10.19 : *intra saepta quae appellant vivaria* où *saepta* désigne les enclos dans lesquels l'empereur Gratien abattait des fauves à coups de flèches.

Joué par de mauvais conseillers (sans doute parmi les *eruditi adulatores* mentionnés en 31.4.4 faut-il compter Thémistios qui célébrera la paix de 382[47] avec des arguments similaires à ceux que développent ici les courtisans de Valens), porté par des espoirs fallacieux, aveugle aux conséquences de sa politique, Valens l'est aussi aux divers signes envoyés par le ciel. La pluie a grossi les eaux du Danube (31.4.5 : *amnem…imbriumque crebritate tunc auctum*), ce que tout lecteur de l'Antiquité reconnaît pour un *omen* défavorable. Qu'on songe par exemple au Rubicon grossi par la fonte des neiges alpines dans le récit de Lucain (*Pharsale*)[48] et qui sert d'avertissement adressé à César sur le point de franchir les limites de sa province. La nature hostile sait manifester son opposition à certaines entreprises humaines. Les premiers noyés (*hausti sunt plures*) ont la même fonction solennelle d'avertissement ultime.

## IV. *L'apport de la* Quellenforschung *à l'interprétation*

Un petit détour par la *Quellenforschung* va me permettre de préciser les enjeux. Très récemment une étude anglaise proposait une analyse très complète du ‹tsunami› du 21 juillet 365 décrit par Ammien Marcellin en 26.10.15–19.[49] Au détour d'un paragraphe, l'auteur (dont ce n'est pas le propos essentiel) livre quelques réflexions fort intéressantes sur les sources d'Ammien pour ce passage.[50] Il repère en effet des convergences convaincantes entre le récit d'Ammien et celui de la tradition ecclésiastique grecque byzantine, en l'espèce Théophane et Georges le Moine.[51] Il conclut timidement à l'utilisation d'une source commune par chacun des trois auteurs indépendamment les uns des autres[52]

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[47] Discours 16, prononcé le 1er janvier 383.

[48] *Pharsale* 1.217–219 : *Tum vires praebebat hiemps, atque auxerat undas/tertia iam gravido pluvialis Cynthia cornu/et madidis euri resolutae flatibus Alpes.*

[49] Gavin Kelly, ‹Ammianus and the great Tsunami›, *JRS* 94 (2004) 141–167.

[50] Pour la manipulation chronologique à laquelle se livre ici Ammien et la comparaison avec Jérôme 244 c Helm, cf. déjà mon étude ‹Signes divins et histoire politique dans la *Chronique* de Jérôme›, dans : Benoît Jeanjean et Bertrand Lançon (éds.), *Chroniques et chronographies dans l'Antiquité tardive (IVe–VIe siècles)* (Rennes 2004) 179–194, ici 184.

[51] Kelly, ‹Ammianus and the great Tsunami›, 151 : comparer Ammien, Théophane p. 56 De Boor et Georges le Moine pp. 560–561 De Boor.

[52] Kelly, ‹Ammianus and the great Tsunami›, 153 : ‹I would argue that Ammianus has based his narrative of events in 26.10.16 on the two stories of which versions are found in Theophanes and George.›

sans se rendre compte qu'il soulève là un beau lièvre, déjà chassé par d'autres, qu'il ne connaît ou ne cite pas.[53] Sa réflexion ne le mène pas plus loin car l'auteur appartient à la catégorie des contempteurs de la *Quellenforschung* au sens strict.[54] Je voudrais ici faire remarquer que cette piste, qu'on aurait tort de négliger par principe, ne conduit néanmoins nulle part pour le passage qui m'occupe. En effet, aucun des historiens grecs, que ce soit Socrate,[55] Théophane ou Georges le Moine, ne fournit le moindre point d'appui avec Ammien en ce qui concerne la polémique sur les armes des Goths. Nous sommes donc, pour Ammien 31.4, condamnés à la comparaison entre l'historien latin et Eunape/Zosime.

Alors qu'Eunape[56] et Zosime[57] prennent la peine (pour disculper Valens?) de préciser que l'empereur n'avait autorisé la traversée des Goths qu'à condition qu'ils laissent leurs armes, Ammien ne dit rien de tel. De deux choses l'une: ou bien Ammien n'a pas la même source qu'Eunape-Zosime ou bien il a sciemment inversé ce qu'il y avait trouvé.[58] Il y a néanmoins de fortes chances que sa version soit historiquement la bonne car comment des hommes désarmés auraient-ils pu

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[53] Cf. notamment les travaux de Timothy D. Barnes, Bruno Bleckmann et François Paschoud auxquels je renvoie dans ma synthèse ‹L'historiographie latine tardive, IIIe–IVe siècle. État des recherches 1987–2002›, *Pallas* 63 (2003) 209–232, plus particulièrement 220–221. Ajouter mon étude ‹Jérôme et l'ombre d'Ammien Marcellin›, dans: G. Bonamente et M. Mayer (éds.), *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Barcinonense* (Bari 2005) 233–247.

[54] Les travaux sur les sources d'Ammien menés par Otto Seeck et François Paschoud sont ainsi rejetés d'une phrase dans la note 67, p. 154.

[55] Rien d'utilisable chez Socr. *HE* 4.34, pp. 269–270 Hansen, seul des trois historiens ecclésiastiques continuateurs d'Eusèbe à mentionner la traversée du Danube mais sans rien dire de la question des armes des Goths.

[56] *Frg.* 42, p. 31 Müller: δεχθῆναι κελεύει τοὺς ἄνδρας τὰ ὅπλα καταθεμένους.

[57] 4.20.6: δέχεσθαι τούτους Οὐάλης ἐπέτρεπε πρότερον ἀποθεμένους τὰ ὅπλα· τῶν δὲ ταξιάρχων, καὶ ὅσοι στρατιωτῶν ἡγεμονίαν εἶχον, διαβάντων μὲν ἐφ' ᾧτε ὅπλων δίχα τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐπὶ τὰ Ῥωμαίων ὅρια παραπέμψαι…

[58] En tout cas on ne peut faire en l'occurrence d'Ammien la source d'Eunape. Cf., *contra*, François Paschoud, ‹Zosime, Eunape et Olympiodore témoin des invasions barbares›, Evangelos K. Chrysos et Andreas Schwarz (éds.), *Das Reich und die Barbaren* (Wien/Köln 1989) 181–201: ‹Pour les années 364–378, ⟨Eunape⟩ a pu avoir en mains aussi bien les *Annales* de Nicomaque Flavien qu'Ammien Marcellin.› L'article est repris dans François Paschoud, *Eunape, Olympiodore, Zosime. Scripta minora* (Bari 2006) 201–221, suivi, p. 222, de la *retractatio* suivante: ‹Je pense aujourd'hui qu'Eunape a certes exploité Nicomaque Flavien, mais nullement Ammien Marcellin.› C'est très exactement, en ce qui concerne Ammien, la conclusion à laquelle me conduit l'examen du motif des Goths désarmés.

servir dans l'armée romaine?[59] On doit en effet rapprocher du témoignage d'Ammien une notice de la *Chronique* de Jérôme, fort précieuse en ce qu'elle a été rédigée moins de six ans après les faits: *Gens Hunnorum Gothos vastat. Qui a Romanis sine armorum depositione suscepti per avaritiam Maximi ducis fame ad rebellandum coacti sunt.*[60] C'est ici la première mention de cet événement dans la littérature historique et se pose à son propos, avec acuité, la grave question des sources de Jérôme pour la période 357–378.[61] Il semble bien que Jérôme veuille répondre, par son insistance à nier la ‹déposition› des armes par les Goths, à une polémique qui se serait développée sur ce thème au moment d'Andrinople. Préciser si Jérôme a exploité une source perdue ou s'il fait allusion à des débats contemporains demeure ardu. L'hypothèse que Jérôme réponde à l'argumentation développée par Thémistios dans son discours 16 présente un haut degré de vraisemblance. L'orateur y célèbre la paix retrouvée avec les Goths dont les armes ont été fondues pour faire des houes et des faux.[62] Même si ce discours, prononcé le 1er janvier 383, est postérieur à la rédaction de la *Chronique*, Jérôme a pu anticiper les arguments de Thémistios.

Ammien Marcellin se trouve donc en plein accord avec Jérôme en soulignant avec force que les Goths n'avaient pas déposé leurs armes. La version de l'historiographe latin prend ainsi sciemment le contre-pied du schéma héroïque traditionnel. Alors qu'un Sertorius, un Massinissa, un Alexandre savent traverser un fleuve tout armés, les Goths sont incapables de le faire seuls, avec dignité: ils n'y parviennent qu'avec l'aide des Romains, dans des conditions qui les ravalent au rang de bêtes sauvages. Ils sont condamnés par cette aristie manquée à demeurer à l'extérieur de la galerie historique des héros dignes de ce nom. Une fois de plus Ammien cherche à priver ces ennemis de Rome de toute légitimité, à dénier à leur traversée toute valeur qualifiante.

Valens est servi par des ministres qu'Ammien qualifie d'*infaustos* (31.4.6). Le sens de l'adjectif est très précis. Ils agissent en dépit des

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[59] Cf. François Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle* 2.2 (*Livre IV*) (Paris 1979) 376.

[60] 248 h Helm.

[61] Cf. mes études ‹Jérôme et Nicomaque Flavien: sur les sources de la *Chronique* pour les années 357–364›, *Historia* 46 (1997) 479–508; ‹Les sources de la *Chronique* de Jérôme pour les années 357–364: nouveaux éléments›, dans: Bernard Pouderon et Yves-Marie Duval (éds.), *L'historiographie de l'église des premiers siècles* (Paris 2001) 425–450.

[62] Cf. Them. *Or.* 16, p. 302, l. 3–5 Schenkl-Downey: ἀκούω παρὰ τῶν ἐκεῖθεν ἀφικνουμένων ὅτι μεταποιοῦσι τὸν σίδηρον ἐκ τῶν ξιφῶν καὶ τῶν θωράκων εἰς δικέλλας νῦν καὶ δρεπάνας.

signes envoyés par les dieux. L'action de Valens n'a pas la sanction de la *felicitas*, qui avait accompagné Julien, depuis les opérations en Gaule[63] jusqu'aux débuts de la campagne persique ;[64] l'empereur voit sa politique marquée au sceau de la honte, exactement comme par exemple celle de Valérien que les dieux avaient abandonné captif aux mains des Perses et que Festus, l'exact contemporain d'Ammien, qualifiait d'*infaustus princeps* (23.1). Le sort de Valens (et encore Andrinople n'est-il pas encore advenu), comme celui de Valérien, semble marqué par une aveugle fatalité, par l'influence d'un dieu caché, retors et hostile (31.4.9 : *quasi laevo quodam numine deligente*).

## V. *Conclusion*

On a souligné plus haut combien les modèles religieux indo-iraniens permettaient de donner du sens à des épisodes de la littérature historiographique antique qui sans cela nous demeureraient opaques. Il en est un, mieux connu désormais, qui se trouve être commun à Suétone et à Ammien : la maîtrise de l'élément liquide comme épreuve qualifiante à l'héroïsme. Si Caligula veut traverser la baie de Naples à cheval,[65] ce n'est pas tant pour rivaliser avec Xerxès que pour signifier au jeune Darius, otage parthe, qu'il est comme le Grand Roi maître de l'élément marin. Dans notre passage on n'a pas toujours compris ce qu'Ammien voulait dire en se référant aux récits antiques sur le nombre des soldats recensés par Xerxès à Doriscos (31.4.7). Naturellement c'est à Hérodote que songe Ammien, qu'il l'ait lu de première main ou non. L'historiographe ne cherche pas à se distinguer des récits du passé jugés mythiques dans leurs excès, comme on le croit parfois à tort. Il souhaite au contraire réhabiliter cette tradition (*resipiscant tandem memoriae veteres*) qui offre en l'occurrence un utile contrepoint aux événements récents. Xerxès a su vaincre l'Hellespont et sans doute avait-il été qualifié selon les croyances anciennes en vue de la conquête d'une nouvelle souveraineté sur la Grèce. L'aristie de Xerxès était réelle, autant que le danger qu'ont courus les Grecs qui, sans Thémistocle, auraient été réduits en servitude. La postérité, même unanime, a eu tort de ne pas croire en la valeur prémonitoire de la traversée de l'Hellespont sur

[63] 16.12.18.
[64] 25.4.1 ; 25.4.14.
[65] Suet. *Cal.* 19.

un pont de bateaux. Aujourd'hui l'opinion ferait bien—tel est le message que lui adresse Ammien—de prendre en compte la réalité de l'invasion gothique et, après tout, Andrinople donnera raison à l'augure délivré par l'historien. La différence notable qui néanmoins sépare la seconde guerre Médique de l'année 376 est que le modèle héroïque dont Ammien s'inspire est par lui sciemment, patiemment et dans le détail subverti afin de prouver à tous que Valens n'est ni Xerxès ni Alexandre.

# GREEK AND ROMAN PARALLEL HISTORY IN AMMIANUS

Giuseppe Zecchini

*Abstract*: The main purpose of this article is to collect the comparative examples taken by Ammianus from the Greek and Roman past. The evidence comprises some 30 items. From their analysis it may be inferred that Ammianus 1) appreciated traditional Roman paganism more than the sophistic wisdom of his time, 2) emphasised the common heritage of Greek and Roman rhetorical culture, 3) emphasised the superiority of the Greeks in astronomy and law(!), 4) portrayed Alexander as an ideal model for the Roman emperors, and 5) refused to admit the politico-military inferiority of the Greeks. This collection of 'parallel' examples can be compared to the Plutarchean project of 'Parallel Lives'. Both are chapters in the history of the Greek effort to become an integrated part of the Roman Empire.

Ammianus' *Res Gestae* is a work of outstanding historical scholarship. The pleasure with which the author evokes the past, often in the form of *exempla*, equals his desire to display his learning and erudition in that part of *paideia*. The vast amount of material in this field that he has passed down to us can be divided into two major categories: a) quotations from Greek and Roman authors, and b) references to events and personalities from Greek and Roman history. Recent research has examined some aspects of Ammianus' 'library', not only concerning the writers he read and/or mentioned such as Homer[1] and Cicero (of whom he has preserved a number of otherwise unknown fragments),[2] whom he considered the greatest representatives of the two literary cultures, but also Ammianus' probable sources in the *excursus* such as Herodotus, Dionysius Periegetes and Timagenes.[3] Modern research has

[1] Pierre-M. Camus, *Ammien Marcellin témoin des courants culturels et religieux à la fin du IVe siècle* (Paris 1967) 34-6; Renata Roncali, 'Omero in Ammiano', *RFIC* 108 (1980) 289–291.

[2] Hugo Michaël, *De Ammiani Marcellini studiis Ciceronianis* (Breslau 1874); Camus, *Ammien Marcellin*, 61–67; Roger C. Blockley, 'Ammianus and Cicero: The Epilogue of the History as a Literary Statement', *Phoenix* 52 (1998) 305–314.

[3] Isabella Gualandri, 'Le fonti geografiche di Ammiano Marcellino XXII,8', *PP* 23 (1968) 199–211; Marta Sordi, 'Timagene di Alessandria, uno storico ellenocentrico

also investigated the relationship of our historian with the history of the Republic, the sources to which Ammianus referred and his personal interpretation of that historical period,[4] with his preferences (those for C. Fabricius Luscinus are obvious)[5] and his dislikes (equally obvious, such as of C. Hostilius Mancinus, who was defeated at Numantia, or of the treatment meted out to Cyprus in 58 BC by Cato).[6] However, Ammianus' relationship with Greek history does not seem to have been studied so far.

I shall limit myself here to a few general observations that will suffice to introduce the subject of my article. There are at least thirty-two strictly historical references which we will define as legendary, including the Trojan War, eighteen concern the history of the Near East from Ninus and Semiramis through the Persian Kings up to the founder of the Parthian dynasty, Arsaces,[7] and fifteen are devoted to Alexander the Great, *conditor altissimus* of Alexandria in Egypt.[8] As an educated pagan Ammianus was interested in myth, and as an Antiochene in the Near East, as an inhabitant of the Eastern provinces in Alexander, who is seen as the model of Roman emperors according to a now well-established tradition of thought.[9] As for the history of the *poleis* of the fifth and fourth centuries BC and Magna Graecia the references are few (four to the two Dionysii and two to Phalaris).[10] There are four references to the Hellenistic monarchies: to Demetrius Poliorcetes (two) and to Cleopatra VII (two).[11]

In what follows I would like to consider in particular a subcategory of b), namely the comparative references to history and, more widely, to Greek and Roman culture. First of all the material to be analysed

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e filobarbaro', *ANRW* II.30.1 (Berlin/New York 1982) 775–797; Jan Willem Drijvers, 'Ammianus Marcellinus on the Geography of the Pontus Euxinus', *Histos* 2 (1998) = http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1998/drijvers.html.

[4] Hermann Finke, *Ammianus Marcellinus und seine Quellen zur Geschichte der römischen Republik* (Heidelberg 1904).

[5] Mentioned in 24.3.5; 24.4.24; 30.1.22.

[6] Mancinus: 14.11.32 and 25.9.11; Cyprus: 14.8.14, on which see Giuseppe Zecchini, 'Catone a Cipro (58–56 a.C.): dal dibattito politico alle polemiche storiografiche', *Aevum* 53 (1979) 78–87.

[7] 23.6.2 and 55.

[8] 22.16.7.

[9] Giuseppe Zecchini, 'Alessandro Magno nella cultura dell'età antonina', in Marta Sordi (ed.), *Alessandro Magno tra storia e mito* (Milan 1984) 195–212.

[10] Dionysius I: 15.5.37; 16.8.10 and 29.2.4; Dionysius II: 14.11.30; Phalaris: 26.10.5 and 28.1.46.

[11] Demetrius Poliorcetes: 23.4.10 and 24.2.18; Cleopatra VII: 22.16.9–10 and 28.4.9.

throughout Ammianus' entire work will be listed and classified, secondly this material will be analysed and studied as part of the overall significance of the *Res Gestae*, more specifically books 30–31, in which it is an important element.

I have selected thirty examples.[12]

1) 14.1.7 links the Greek Amphiaraus and the Roman Marcius (whose prophecies were discovered in 213 BC and kept in the Capitol with the Sibylline Books) to examples of celebrated soothsayers of the past.[13] It is worth noting from the outset that our historian shows great interest in Roman and Etruscan divination, especially such as found in Tages' and Vegoia's books (17.10.2), the *fulgurales libri* (23.5.13) and the Tarquitian books (25.2.7); cf. also n° 8 and n° 17.

2) 14.6.8, about the rejection of ostentious display of glory, adds to a reference of Hesiod (*Op.* 268 sqq.) a *Dictum Catonis* also preserved for us by Plutarch.[14]

3) 14.8.2: within the digression on the Eastern Provinces, the urbanisation of Isauria is attributed equally to the Hellenistic monarch Seleucus I, founder of the Seleucid Empire, and to the Roman emperor Claudius, founder of Claudiopolis.

4) 14.11.30–32: the end of Gallus Caesar inspires some thoughts on the fickleness and inconstancy of fortune, which are illustrated by three Greek examples i.e. Agathocles, Dionysius II and Andriscus; five Roman examples: C. Hostilius Mancinus (at Numantia), T. Veturius Calv-

[12] I have excluded any implicit link, for instance the ethnography of Huns and Scyths in 31.2, in which the list of peoples living in Scythia from the Tanais to China in 13–16 is drawn up on the basis of material from Herodotus and from Pomponius Mela, the Greek and Latin authorities on the subject. A similar classification was undertaken by Carl J. Classen, 'Greek and Roman in Ammianus Marcellinus' History', *Museum Africum* 1 (1972) 39–47, but only up to book 22 (as well as a parallel from book 24): Classen has the examples corresponding to 1–6, 8, 10–12, 14 and 18 of my collection; he adds 14.11.25–26 (on the Greek concept of Adrastia explained with Latin terms and references) and 15.10.9–11 (on Hercules and P. Cornelius Scipio, father of Scipio Africanus), but the first example is not a true and proper comparison, the second is simply mistaken, as the comparison is not between Hercules and Scipio the Father, but between Hercules and Hannibal; finally on the unsatisfactory interpretation given by Classen of 12, cf. n. 18 below.

[13] Liv. 25.12.2–5.

[14] Plut. *Apophth.* 10 = *Cato maior* 19.4 = *M. Porci Catonis quae supersunt* p. 104 Jordan.

inus (at the Caudine Forks), a Claudius (M. Claudius Clineas?) in Corsica in 236 BC,[15] Regulus and Pompey; and three examples of rebel slaves and outlaws: Eunus, Spartacus and Viriathus, which caused the Romans serious trouble. The death of Gallus is the first *exitus principis* to receive explicit comment from Ammianus, whose purpose is to summarise the personality of the deceased. This comment is particularly rich in the use of comparative *exempla*. It is a stereotype which Ammianus maintains throughout the remaining work. The slight preponderance of Roman *exempla* concerning a prince with a bad reputation is perhaps no coincidence, as we shall be able to verify at a later stage.

5) 16.5.1: the Roman *leges sumptuariae*, renewed by Sulla, are derived from the *rhetrae* of Lycurgus. In his effort to restore public frugality, Sulla was inspired by the teaching of Democritus. Also Cato wrote on the same subject with equal wisdom. More interesting than the bizarre pairing of Democritus with Cato is the statement that the Roman legislation on luxury was copied from that of Sparta, thereby claiming primacy for the latter.

6) 16.7.4 links Socrates with Numa Pompilius, models of men incapable of falsehood and endowed with indisputable trustworthiness.

7) 17.11.3 links Cimon to Scipio Aemilianus, examples of benefactors of their homeland unjustly accused by their compatriots, adding Pompey as the third isolated *exemplum*. The three are intended as illustrious precursors of Julian. Note that the comparison between Cimon and Scipio Aemilianus, as has already been observed,[16] does not derive from Polybius (31.23), but rather from Plutarch (*Ad principem ineruditum* 782 f.).

8) 21.1.8–11: on the subject of divination, links the Greek goddess Themis, the Etruscan Tages and the Sibyls.

9) 21.1.12–14: immediately after and concerning a similar subject, i.e. human fallibility in the interpretation of dreams, the two authorities are Aristotle and Cicero.

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[15] For this minor episode—on which see Piero Meloni, *La Sardegna romana* (Sassari 1975) 41—Ammianus agrees with Valerius Maximus (6.3.3): both from Livy?

[16] Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae (Paris 1978) 98 n. 170.

10) 21.14 introduces the section on the death of Constantius II with a chapter on the omens which foretold it and on the daemon or genius that accompanies man from birth to death. Examples of famous people who had a special relationship with their daemon are Pythagoras, Socrates, Numa Pompilius (already linked to Socrates in n° 6) and Scipio Africanus, that is to say two Greeks and two Romans, to whom Ammianus adds C. Marius and Octavian, albeit with some hesitation (*ut quidam existimant*); further examples are Hermes Termaximus (i.e. Trismegistos), Apollonius of Tyana and Plotinus, representatives of the Hellenistico-Roman world, who therefore do not belong to the same category.

11) 21.16.13–14: the only comparison made in the long chapter summarising the virtues and vices of Constantius II is between Heraclitus (fr. 85 Diels-Kranz) and Cicero (in a lost letter to Cornelius Nepos) about true happiness, which implies the renunciation of cruelty and therefore also of power, as it can only be maintained by using violence.[17]

12) 22.4.5–8: comparisons concerning Julian start here. He strove to restore morality at the court and discipline in the army according to the ideals illustrated by the *exempla* of Cincinnatus, who after his dictatorship returned to cultivate his own plot of land, of Spartan soldiers, who, in times of war, were never allowed to take shelter under a roof, and, from more recent times, of one of Maximian's (i.e. Galerius') soldiers who threw away the pearls he had accidentally found in a jewellery box during the sack of an enemy camp.[18]

13) 22.8.40: in the digression on the Pontus Euxinus,[19] the altars installed by Alexander and by Augustus at the Forks of the Borysthenes (Dnjepr) are mentioned. The link between the founder of the Empire

[17] The meaning of the passage from Heraclitus is completely misunderstood by Ammianus, perhaps influenced by Plutarch *De cohib. ira* 457 d, even though Classen, 'Greek and Roman', 42 with perhaps excessive scepticism doubts that Ammianus had direct knowledge of Plutarch.

[18] The story on the Spartan soldiers is not found elsewhere; the tentative reference to Plut. *Lyc.* 12.5–6 suggested by Jan den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen 1995) 45 is not convincing; Classen, 'Greek and Roman', 42 sees the comparison between the soldier of Maximian and the Spartan soldiers, but not between Cincinnatus and the Spartan soldiers.

[19] 22.8.1–49, analysed by Gualandri and Drijvers (see above n. 3).

and the Hellenistic model for every sovereign is a benchmark in the political ideology of the Eastern Romans, a fact which did not escape Ammianus.

14) 22.9.9 for the first time puts forward the comparison between such models of ancient severity as Lycurgus, Demosthenes' contemporary, and L. Cassius Longinus, consul in 127 and *praetor urbanus* in 111 BC,[20] although Julian surpassed them both. The same couple is also mentioned in 30.8.13 regarding the excessive severity that Valentinian I tolerated in his judges. Even if in the second example the context is partly critical (about Valentinian's cruelty), Longinus and Lycurgus are *columina iustitiae prisca*, stereotypes of the true justice that ruled in Rome and Greece in ancient times.

15) 22.16.12: the Serapaeum in Alexandria is acclaimed the most splendid monument in the world after the Capitol in Rome.

16) 22.16.22 suggests that Solon's legislation is the basis for Roman law (*Solon…Romano quoque iuri maximum addidit fundamentum*), thereby supporting the tradition according to which the *decemviri* visited Athens before the "Laws of the XII tablets" were promulgated. Remember that n° 5 considers that the *leges sumptuariae* are derived from the Spartan legislation of Lycurgus. The gist of the two passages presents Roman law as a construction from a Greek or rather a Spartan-Athenian matrix.

17) 23.5.9–14, during Julian's Persian expedition, mentions three ambiguous oracles from Delphi (Croesus, the defence of Athens in the Second Persian War and Pyrrhus and the Romans) on the occasion of the contest between Etruscan *haruspices* and 'philosophers' (Greek sophists) on the interpretation of some portents regarding the emperor. The former interpreted the omens as unfavourable and events proved them totally right. Here Ammianus seems to confirm the superiority of Etrusco-Roman divination.

18) 24.4.27: Julian's chastity as regards the treatment of captured female enemies is compared to that of Alexander and Scipio Africanus.

[20] J. Fontaine, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome III, Livres XX–XXII* (Paris 1996) 311 n. 886.

19) 25.3.8 and 4.15–17: the death of Julian first gives rise to a comparison with Epaminondas at Mantinea because of the courage and energy displayed by both when mortally wounded, and next, in the traditional summing up of Julian's virtues and vices, the comparison is again made with Alexander, not concerning Julian's chastity, but rather his indifference in money matters, and, finally, a comparison is made with the two great Roman emperors Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, this time on the subject of a few venial defects, that is superstition and Julian's excessive sacrificing to the gods.

20) 26.1.12–13: inside the *excursus* on the calculation of the leap year, the astronomical knowledge of the Greeks is contrasted with the ignorance of the Romans on the subject (*diu ignoravere Romani*) and with the mistakes made by their priests, to whom the *potestatem…interkalandi* was entrusted; this situation was remedied by Augustus who decided to follow the authority of the Greeks (*Graecos secutus*).[21] In any case, here the relationship between Greeks and Romans is not one of mere approach, but of contrast between the wisdom of the one and the ignorance of the other, besides the cultural dependence of the latter on the former.

21) 28.4.18 couples the *itinera* of Alexander and Caesar in a context that does not consider the military campaigns, but rather the exploratory expeditions to the borders of the known world, India and Britain respectively.

22) 29.2.19: a comparison is made between the proconsul of Syria in 43 BC, P. Cornelius Dolabella,[22] and the Areopagus, in which the former is not capable of making a decision when faced with a difficult case (a woman poisoned her husband and son who had been accused of having killed her son from a previous marriage; should the poisoner be acquitted or the legitimate vengeance-seeker punished?). The Areopagus, famous for its fairness, which was once even made use of by the gods, resolved the problem brilliantly by ordering the woman and her accuser to present themselves at the court in a hundred years' time.

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[21] Possibly Ammianus inadvertently substituted Augustus for Caesar in the matter of the reform of the calendar or refers to the further work done by Augustus on the Julian calendar: Suet. *Jul.* 40.1–2; *Aug.* 31.2.

[22] Ammianus writes *proconsulem Asiae*, but cf. Thomas R.S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* II (New York 1952) 344.

The significance of emphasising the superiority of the ancient Greek legal wisdom over that of the Romans is obvious.

23) 30.1.22–23: two contrasting examples, both Roman, are found on the subject of the murder of a guest invited to a banquet, i.e. C. Fabricius Luscinus, who warned Pyrrhus of a similar risk, and Perperna who assassinated Sertorius during a feast; but Demosthenes, *perpetuum Graeciae decus*, is made to proclaim that no crime is justifiable only because a similar crime has already been committed. These examples seem to indicate that Greek and Roman civilisation are not contrasted, but rather share the same ethical principles.

24) 30.4.5–7: the digression on forensic rhetoric links the great Greek orators (Demosthenes, Callistratus, Hyperides, Aeschines, Andocides, Dinarchos and Antiphon) to the great Roman orators admired by Cicero (P. Rutilius Rufus, Ser. Sulpicius Galba, M. Aemilius Scaurus, L. Licinius Crassus, M. Antonius, L. Marcius Philippus and Q. Mucius Scaevola) as well as to Cicero himself, who is presented as the only Roman to match Demosthenes.[23] Here Ammianus seems to want to insist on the perfect equality between the two cultural components of the Empire.

25) 30.4.21, still in the same digression, contains the obvious comparison between Aristides and Cato. The latter was also compared to Hesiod (n° 2) and Democritus (n° 5).

26) 30.8.4–5, included in the recapitulatory chapter on the virtues and vices of Valentinian I, a first comparison is made between Artaxerxes I Longimanus and L. Papirius Cursor as examples of clemency and mildness in contrast with the cruelty of the emperor who had just died.

27) 30.8.6: in the same context, a second comparison on the value of leniency toward the defeated is made between Isocrates and Cicero, whose remark was inspired by his Greek counterpart (*unde motum*).[24]

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[23] Guy Sabbah with notes by Laurent Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome VI, Livres XXIX–XXXI* (Paris 1999) 218–219, nn. 250 and 251.

[24] Isocr. *Panathen.* 185.

28) 30.8.8–9: in the same context, a third comparison on the lack of avarice and respect for other people's property is made between Themistocles and the entire Roman people during the times of Marius and Cinna.[25]

29) 30.8.13: in the same context, a fourth comparison on the severity of judges is made between Lycurgus and L. Cassius Longinus, already mentioned above in n° 14.

30) 31.13.19: the tragic conflict at Adrianople, at which point the *Res Gestae* mournfully come to an end, reminds Ammianus of the many battles that had brought suffering to the Greeks (*certamina multa fabulosae naeniae flevere Graecorum*) and also of some defeats suffered by the Romans (*Romani aliquotiens reflante Fortuna fallaciis lusi bellorum iniquitati cesserunt ad tempus*); but in the final comparison he only mentions the grave defeat of the Romans at Cannae.

Here the collection of material ends.

My first observation is that, of the thirty examples selected, four are concentrated in book 14, nine in books 21 and 22 and eight in the last two books, while in the remaining books there is fewer than one *exemplum* of this type per book. There is, therefore, a fairly regular alternation between not one single *exemplum* and many of them, with an increase in frequency towards the end of the work.[26]

A primary topic that inspired Ammianus to produce *exempla* of this type concerns prophecy and divination. Here our historian pays great attention to the Etrusco-Roman world, which merits five mentions. In two of them (n° 1 and n° 8) it holds its own when compared to the Greek world. One of the examples also confirms the superiority of Julian's own *haruspices* to the 'philosophers' during the Persian expedition (n° 17). This preference is surprising in a pagan (original or converted from Christianity) from the East, but it may perhaps be under-

[25] Here (as in n. 15 above) Ammianus also draws from Valerius Maximus (4.3.14) or from a common source.

[26] The best survey on the *exempla* in Ammianus is that of Roger C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus. A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels 1975) 157–167 and 191–194 (111 *exempla*); Idem, 'Ammianus Marcellinus' use of exempla', *Florilegium* 13 (1994) 53–64, however mainly devoted to Roman *exempla*. See also Camus, *Ammien Marcellin*, 84–88.

stood in the context of the opposition between past and present.[27] In my opinion, a person like Ammianus, who felt nostalgic about ancient times, would equally value such symbols of Graeco-Roman paganism as Amphiaraus and Marcius (n° 1) and Themis and Tages (n° 8) and oppose the divinatory skills of the *haruspices*, exponents of the same tradition, to the superficiality and presumption of contemporary 'philosophers', i.e. the Sophists, with whom Julian surrounded himself; Julian was admired for many reasons, but criticised for his cultural and religious choices in the field of paganism. Therefore the argument in n° 17 should not be seen as an affirmation of Etrusco-Roman superiority over the Greeks, but as the superiority of representatives of an archaic style of paganism as against the Neoplatonic trends of the Sophists in Julian's entourage.

On a cultural and ethical level the equality between Greece and Rome is sustained with great determination. Hesiod and Cato (n° 2) expressed themselves in an exemplary manner on the subject of true glory, Aristotle and Cicero (n° 9) on human fallibility; Cicero, again, and Heraclitus (n° 11) on true happiness while Cicero and Isocrates (n° 27) proclaimed the value of lenience. The catalogue of the most famous forensic orators (n° 24) reveals the search of a perfect balance (seven Greeks and seven Romans as well as Cicero, mentioned 'outside the catalogue' really in order to even the score) and a circular movement from Demosthenes to Cicero becomes clear. On the other hand, the cultural authorities favoured by Ammianus and most often quoted by him, are Homer and Cicero, each on one side. Finally, examples of personalities known for their virtues are always found in pairs: Numa and Socrates for their trustworthiness (n° 6), Pythagoras and Socrates on the one hand and Numa, together with Scipio Africanus on the other, are paired on account of their saintliness that made intimate communication with their *genius* possible (n° 10), Democritus and Cato (n° 5) or alternatively Cincinnatus and the Spartan soldiers for their frugality (n° 12), Aristides and Cato for their sense of justice (n° 25).

Astronomy is the single but clear exception. Here (n° 20) the inferiority of the Romans is emphasised in a scathing manner in two successive stages: the original ignorance and the request to the Greeks for advice on a remedy. The criticism of the Roman priesthood accused of incompetence and corruption is impressive, because Ammianus thought high-

[27] According to Timothy D. Barnes' well-known theory in *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 79–94.

ly of their divinatory skills. Here he shows his aversion to any form of dilettantism and claims a clear subdivision of science among the various skills typical of a culturally advanced age.

On the subject of law and legislation Ammianus is surprisingly unequivocal not only by giving the primacy to Greece, but also by showing the great dependence of Roman law on that of Athens (the Solonian laws; n° 16) and of Sparta (the *rhetrae* of Lycurgus; n° 5); moreover, also in the implementation of laws and in the practical, daily execution of justice, although Lycurgus of Athens and L. Cassius Longinus are twice mentioned as equal examples of severity (n° 14 and n° 29),[28] in the comparison between Dolabella and the Areopagus (n° 22) the latter is considered far superior. The peculiarity of Ammianus' opinion in this matter may be explained by taking into account the audience he was addressing, namely the bilingual functionaries who in the *pars Orientis* constituted the management class of the Empire.[29] These officials had been trained in rhetoric and law and, whereas the importance of rhetoric in the Hellenistic *paideia* was indisputable, in the schools of law, in the first place that of Berytus in Syria, they were taught that the *ius Romanum* was unrivalled. Ammianus decidedly wanted to resist a feeling of inferiority according to which the cultural roots of an essential part of the Roman society of his time, law, were the prerogative of a single *pars imperii*, namely that of the West.

In the area of history and politics, the personality most often referred to is without doubt Alexander the Great.[30] It has already been noted that the Macedonian is in every sense the figure most mentioned (fifteen times) and always in positive terms; but it must now be added that besides Scipio Africanus he was the Greek paragon of chastity and respect for the women of the vanquished (n° 18), besides Caesar he

[28] The third time that L. Cassius Longinus is referred to is in 26.10.10 along with Cato the Censor.

[29] Most recently Robert M. Frakes, 'Ammianus Marcellinus and his intended audience', in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History X* (Brussels 2000) 392–442, and earlier John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 467–468.

[30] In general cf. Rosario Soraci, 'La figura di Alessandro Magno nell'opera di Ammiano Marcellino', *QC* 9 (1987) 297–311 and Francisco J. Lomas Salmonte, 'Lectura helénica de las Res gestae Iuliani de Amiano Marcelino a la sombra de Alejandro Magno', *Neronia* IV (Brussels 1990) 306–327; also cf. for a famous contemporary of Ammianus, Paolo Desideri, 'Alessandro nei discorsi politici di Temistio', in: J.M. Carrié, R. Lizzi Testa (eds.), "*Humana sapit*": *études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* (Turnhout 2002) 169–178.

was the symbol of love of adventure and of the audacity with which he explored the ends of the earth (n° 21), besides Augustus he was the symbol of world power, extending to the boundaries of the earth (n° 13) and finally, besides Julian, Alexander was a symbol of disinterest in wealth and of lack of avarice (n° 19). Through these four comparisons it is possible to construct an ideal picture of Alexander, an *exemplum virtutum* without any defect, in short the type of an ideal monarch. Here Ammianus is totally and in every respect a representative of Hellenism, whose world was created by Alexander and inherited by the Roman Empire since the emperors were inspired by the Macedonian and were faithful heirs who followed his lead. The proud assertion by Ammianus that the Serapaeum of Alexandria was inferior only to the Capitol of Rome (n° 15) could be explained by his desire to present that city as the second capital of the Empire in that it had been founded by Alexander. This is certainly a provocative idea when one thinks of the Christian and therefore detested city of Constantinople, and all the more effective coming from an Antiochene.

The dialectical relationship between Alexander and the great personalities of the Roman era, the *imitatio* and the *aemulatio* it implies, were a highly controversial subject. Livy, as is well known, was happy to compare Alexander with a list of no less than eleven contemporary Roman generals, among whom L. Papirius Cursor, who would have been able to stop Alexander, if he had dared to invade Italy.[31] Ammianus hesitates to draw a direct comparison between the Macedonian and Roman generals of the fourth century; but he knows his Livy and modifies his statement—virtually in parenthesis. In the completely neutral comparison between Cursor and Artaxerxes I Longimanus (n° 26), he observes that *Papirius Cursor…solus ad resistendum aptus Alexandro Magno, si calcasset Italiam, aestimatus*. It should be added that Cursor is explicitly identified as the 'only' Roman capable of opposing Alexander (Livy had mentioned eleven!) and furthermore that this concession is also called into question by the final *aestimatus*, by which our historian distances himself from the authority of Livy.

After Alexander the Great it were the Roman emperors of his own time that stimulated Ammianus to make important historical comparisons, above all in the summarising chapters following the end of the reign of each emperor. The first is Gallus, who died at the age of 29

[31] Liv. 9.17.7.

after four years as Caesar (n° 4), mentioned as an example of those who rise quickly and are equally rapidly struck by misfortune. Ammianus follows the account of his reign with a substantial amount of historical references, of which Agathocles is the only positive one, while the other two Greeks, Dionysius II and Andriscus and all five Romans conform to the theme of sudden collapse in personal destiny. Three slaves and outlaws, who became mercenary generals and forced many famous Romans to bend their knees in supplication (*quam multi splendido loco nati Romani…Viriathi genua sunt amplexi uel Spartaci*, 14.11.33), are added almost as an afterthought, and this contributes to focusing the reader's attention on a series of humiliations and reversals in the history of the Eternal City. The end of a *malus princeps* recalls the many defeats which Rome suffered in the past.

In 21.16 Constantius II, another *malus princeps*, at least from Ammianus' point of view, is only compared with emperors like Caligula, Domitian, Commodus and Gallienus, all of whom surpassed him in cruelty, whereas he is contrasted with Marcus Aurelius, an example of mildness.

Julian, however, when he was still Caesar in Gaul, was compared right from the start not only to Scipio Aemilianus and Pompey, but also to the Athenian Cimon (n° 7) and later, during the Persian expedition in which he died, first to Alexander and to Scipio Africanus (n° 18), then again to Alexander and to Epaminondas as well as to two emperors of such stature as Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius (n° 19).[32] The comparison with Epaminondas is especially significant. In *Or.* 4.71 Gregory Nazianzen puts forward the comparison with Epaminondas and with Scipio (almost certainly Aemilianus), thus remaining loyal to the Plutarchean pair lost to us. The omission of Scipio in Ammianus does not seem to be accidental, since both Aemilianus and Africanus had already been mentioned as Julian's models, but only Epaminon-

[32] After the mention of Epaminondas in 25.3.8 Ammianus mentions the three Roman 'heroes' M. Claudius Marcellus, L. Sicinius Dentatus and M. Sergius Silus, the ancestor of Catilina, in 25.3.13 in the context of the furious battle between the Romans and the Persians in which Julian was mortally wounded. It deals, however, with comparisons between the ancient and current valour of Roman soldiers, not with direct comparisons between the three 'heroes' and Julian, so I omit them from the text. It must be noticed, in confirmation of what has been said, that L. Sicinius Dentatus and M. Sergius Silus were also paradigms of Roman valour in a battle of Valentinian I against the Germans in 27.10.16. For M. Sergius Silus cf. J. Fontaine, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome IV.2, Livres XXIII–XXV* (Paris 1977) 217, n. 540.

das had fallen in battle and therefore only he could be mentioned in the solemn hour of Julian's death. Thus Ammianus achieves the dual effect of adhering to the historical truth and of establishing the most important comparison between Julian and a Greek.

Overall, Ammianus has highly positive *exempla* for his favourite hero, besides giving a balanced presentation of Julian as the heir, the last glorious exponent of the dual Graeco-Roman tradition, in which Greece has a military role that is not limited to Alexander only and that, thanks to Cimon and Epaminondas, can hold its own in a comparison with Rome.

Within the same book, Julian's successor Jovian, whom our historian does not rate very highly, is accused of having concluded a shameful peace treaty with the Persians and of having ceded Nisibis to them. In this context the only comparisons with the past are Roman, from the Caudine Forks to the surrender of A. Postumius Albinus before Jugurtha and that of Mancinus at Numantia (25.9.11); in addition, in the summarising chapter 25.10 the only comparison is with Scipio Aemilianus (on the mysterious causes of their deaths).

Valentinian I is an emperor about whom Ammianus has a mixed opinion, although on the whole it is more positive than negative. However, only his vices are contrasted with virtuous examples from the past, carefully chosen in pairs, Artaxerxes I Longimanus and L. Papirius Cursor (n° 26), Themistocles and the Roman people in the days of Marius and Cinna (n° 28). Not a *malus princeps*, Valentinian seems to be too far below the Hellenistic ideals of Ammianus to merit comparison with the great figures of Greek history.

In the final dramatic book of the *Res Gestae*, chapter 31.14 is devoted to a summary of the virtues and vices of Valens, but they are not linked to comparisons between the Greeks and the Romans, in contrast to those recorded in chapter 30.8 on Valentinian I; indeed the double mention in 31.14.8 of Homer and Cicero, who both mention Mount Mimas (where Valens, on account of a misinterpreted prophecy, feared he would die), does not seem very important to me. What does seem important in the light of what has been observed here, is that in the narrative about the final days of Valens in 31.13.17 the only comparison made is with Cn. Cornelius Scipio, Africanus' uncle, who fell in Spain in 211 BC: again a Roman precedent for the death of the last *malus princeps* of the *Res Gestae*.

Gallus, Constantius II, Julian, Jovian, Valentinian I and Valens are the six emperors on whom Ammianus passes judgement in his work.

He is entirely positive only about Julian, who is compared in equal measure to great men in Greek and Roman history, while the other five are only given parallels taken from Roman history.

On the basis of these assessments Adrianople (n° 30) is linked to a number of unnamed defeats by the Greeks and by the Romans, but only the battle of Cannae is explicitly mentioned. If Valens is comparable to Cn. Cornelius Scipio and Adrianople to Cannae, the Gothic War leads us to a comparison with the Second Punic War, which had threatened the very existence of Rome, but was ultimately won. Being the patriot he is, Ammianus naturally hopes that the same will also happen to the barbarians of his own time.[33] However, the reader is left with the feeling that Rome is vulnerable and that the recurrent danger of bad government and of catastrophic defeats tarnishes the brilliant image of the greatness of the Eternal City, an image dear to the senatorial tradition, which Ammianus famously distrusts.

Therefore the reticence about the Greek defeats, too, cannot be accidental. One must bear in mind that Ammianus never hints at either the celebrated defeats of the Classical Age (e.g. the Athenian expeditions to Egypt and Sicily) or, even more strikingly, the disastrous battles fought by the Greeks against the Roman legions. Pyrrhus is mentioned for the plan to poison him, which was thwarted by C. Fabricius Luscinus (30.1.22) and for his skills in setting up and fortifying a camp (24.1.3), but nothing is said about how things ended between him and Rome. Cleopatra VII is mentioned twice (22.16.9–10 and 28.4.9), but Actium not even once.

Under the influence of ideas held by the Romans themselves we are in the habit of automatically thinking that the Greeks are superior to the Romans at the cultural level of the *paideia* but inferior at the political-military level. We must understand that this was not the opinion of Ammianus. For him the only obvious superiority of the Romans, or rather Etrusco-Romans, lay in their religion, compared to the paganism of the Hellenistic Sophists of his time, whom he did not admire. There was parity as far as ethical *exempla* were concerned, in the inheritance of common values. Roman inferiority was clear in the field of the sciences (astronomy), but in state legislation, too, Rome was a pupil of Athens and Sparta. Thus it was a short step from the refusal to accept the

[33] As emphasised recently by Klaus Rosen, *Die Völkerwanderung* (Munich 2002) 13–14.

legal superiority of Rome to the refusal to admit its political superiority. There were defeats on both sides, but Greece, too, had its heroes (the Spartans, Cimon, Themistocles, Epaminondas, Agathocles) and, above all, it had provided the Roman Empire with the model of the ideal monarch in the person of Alexander the Great.

This admittedly unrealistic assessment of the Greek legal, political and military traditions and the inclusion of data intended to record obscure aspects of Roman history serve the same purpose of balancing the efforts that the two sides had contributed toward the construction and glory of the Empire. As is well known, there were some who did not support this view: Libanius, Ammianus' fellow-countryman, maintained that only the passing of the Roman Empire would restore the independence of the past to the Hellenistic *poleis*. Ammianus, on the other hand, does not repudiate Rome—he was certainly not anti-Roman—, but he did reject western and anti-Hellenistic superiority in any form. He was, after all, *miles et Graecus* and wrote for a public with a similar background (the functionaries of the Eastern Empire) and with similar patriotic sentiments. At the same time, however, he wanted to express pride in his Greek origins and combat any feeling of inferiority towards the West.

In this reading and presentation of the past as a harmonious synthesis of Greek and Roman elements, Plutarch served as Ammianus' authoritative model.[34] Recent scholarship has insisted on the 'historical' nature of the *Parallel Lives* in the sense that in his work Plutarch intended to be an historian as well as a biographer and that his overall plan corresponded to the grandiose design to claim an equal role for Greece and Rome in the formation of the historical memory of the Empire.[35] This plan was in line with the conviction that the Hellenistic 'philosopher' and intellectual must play the role of political advisor to the emperor. It may be a part Plutarch himself played during a brief

[34] Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 162 suggests Valerius Maximus as a model and the 'Romans–Greeks' of Ammianus should correspond to the 'Romans—foreigners' categories of the former; it is hardly necessary to note that the Greeks were not foreigners for Ammianus!

[35] Paolo Desideri, '"Non scriviamo storie, ma vite". Plut. *Alex*. 1.2. La formula biografica di Plutarco', in: *Testis temporum. Aspetti e problemi della storiografia antica* (Como 1995) 15–25; cf. also Idem, 'La formazione delle coppie nelle "Vite" plutarchee', *ANRW* II.33.6 (Berlin/New York 1992) 4470–4486.

period in the early years of Trajan, when he probably wrote the *Ad principem ineruditum* and the *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*.[36]

The plan of the *Parallel Lives* was very successful and was imitated by many. Amyntianus is the best known example, who in the Antonine age wrote the *Lives* of Dionysius I and Domitian, and of Philip II and Augustus.[37] During the same age the literary work of Damophilos of Bithynia, author of περὶ βίων (or βίου) ἀρχαίων, demonstrates the precocious success of Plutarch.[38] The prestige of the author from Chaeronea is solid and widely known throughout Late Antiquity and not limited to the *Moralia*.[39] Both Julian and Gregory Nazianzen refer to the *Parallel Lives*. The former does so in his *Misopogon* addressed to the inhabitants of Antiochia (358a–359a). Therefore it does not really come as a surprise that Ammianus the Antiochene shared this high regard for Plutarch and appreciated him as a source and a cultural model.[40] It has been noted earlier that behind the 'Julian–Epaminondas' comparison is the Plutarchean one of 'Scipio–Epaminondas', that Ammianus derives the comparison between Cimon and Scipio Aemilianus (n° 7) from Plutarch's *Apophthegmata*, and finally that the misinterpretation of a passage of Heraclitus (n° 11) may have been caused by the *De cohibenda ira*.[41]

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[36] Giuseppe Zecchini, 'Plutarch as political theorist and Trajan: some reflections', in: Philip A. Stadter, Luc van der Stockt (eds.), *Sage and Emperor* (Louvain 2002) 191–200. On the *exempla* in Plutarch's political pamphlets cf. also Luisa Prandi, 'Gli esempi del passato greco nei Precetti politici di Plutarco', *RSA* 30 (2000) 91–107.

[37] Giuseppe Zecchini, 'Modelli e problemi teorici della storiografia nell'età degli Antonini', *CS* 20 (1983) 3–31, at 11–12.

[38] Milena Raimondi, 'Damofilo di Bitinia e il De fortuna Romanorum di Plutarco', in: Lucio Troiani, Giuseppe Zecchini (eds.), *La cultura storica nei primi due secoli dell'impero romano* (Rome 2005) 217–248.

[39] Marcello La Matina, 'Plutarco negli autori cristiani greci', in: I. Gallo (ed.), *L'eredità culturale di Plutarco dall'Antichità al Rinascimento. Atti del VII Convegno plutarcheo Milano-Gargnano, 28–30 maggio 1997* (Naples 1998) 81–110 (here previous bibliography).

[40] I do not understand why Fabio Stok, 'Plutarco nella letteratura latina imperiale', in: I. Gallo (ed.), *L'eredità culturale di Plutarco dall'Antichità al Rinascimento. Atti del VII Convegno plutarcheo Milano-Gargnano, 28–30 maggio 1997* (Naples 1998) 55–80, at 72 speaks of Ammianus' lack of interest in Plutarch.

[41] In contrast the *Dictum Catonis* of 14.6.8 (n° 2), which agrees with Plut. *Cato mai.* 19.4, would seem to derive from a collection like the other two *dicta* of 15.12.4 and of 16.5.2; on another presumed agreement with Plut. *Lyc.* 12.5–6, cf. above note 18. The anecdote about Socrates in 28.4.15 derives from Val. Max. 8.7 *ext.* 8 and Ammianus' final addition echoes the Solonian 'as I grow old I am always learning many things', but it does not prove the knowledge of Plut. *Sol.* 2.2 and 31.7.

However what I want to emphasise in this context is not so much the general influence of Plutarch on Ammianus and his environment as the conscious effort of the historian to revive Plutarch's grandiose design. It is true that the cultural situation had changed as regards the reciprocal knowledge of both parts, since in the first/second century Greek was known in the West and in the East Latin was still despised, but by the fourth century the opposite was the case. It is equally true that the rich contemporary historical and biographical output—the *Vitae Principum* of the *Historia Augusta* on the one hand, the Βίοι σοφιστῶν of Eunapius on the other—sanctioned the separation between the two halves of the Empire and their cultures, while the now widespread ignorance of Greek and of Hellenic *paideia* resulted in Roman senators reading only Marius Maximus and the anti-Hellenic Juvenal.[42]

However, though the cultural context was difficult by now, Ammianus obstinately advocates the image of a bilingual Empire (being a *Graecus* himself, who writes in Latin!) and of a dual historical heritage. Neither its Greek nor its Roman part can be renounced in the education of the management class—the public Ammianus is writing for—to a common awareness of the roots of the Empire, to a shared idea of the values by which it was ruled, and therefore, in short, also to a more effective partnership in the present difficulties. The massive and careful use of comparative *exempla* in the *Res Gestae* therefore serves the purpose of political education of its readers. Ammianus intends to contribute towards shaping the conscience of the Eastern cultured class with governmental responsibilities, who must at the same time be Roman patriots and Greeks proud of their past, in the same way as Plutarch had wished to instil in his Roman and Greek readers respect for and pride in ancient Hellas.

[42] Philip J. Smith, 'A Note on Ammianus Marcellinus and Juvenal', *LCM* 19 (1994) 23–24 has appropriately stressed that Ammianus disliked Juvenal just because he was anti-Hellenic.

# THE SPHRAGIS AND CLOSURE OF THE *RES GESTAE*

Gavin Kelly

*Abstract*: The closing sentence of the *Res Gestae* has been interpreted both as a recommendation that qualified successors should continue Ammianus' history in the same grandiose and allusive manner, and also as a warning that events after Theodosius' accession can only be narrated in the medium of panegyric. This article argues that, though in some ways contradictory, both interpretations should be accepted. An equivalent tension exists in the closure of the *Res Gestae* as a whole: the final book neatly closes the story of Valens, but leaves the story of the Gothic war abruptly unfinished. This open ending is reinforced by the implication in several places that Ammianus was unimpressed by Theodosius' prosecution and conclusion of the war.

## I. *The Sphragis*

*Haec ut miles quondam et Graecus, a principatu Caesaris Nervae exorsus ad usque Valentis interitum pro virium explicavi mensura, opus veritatem professum numquam, ut arbitror, sciens silentio ausus corrumpere vel mendacio. scribant reliqua potiores aetate, doctrinis florentes. quos id, si libuerit, aggressuros, procudere linguas ad maiores moneo stilos.*

These events, beginning from the principate of Nerva Caesar up to the death of Valens, I, a former soldier and a Greek, have unrolled to the best of my strength: it is a work which claims truthfulness and which, so I think, I have never knowingly dared to warp with silence or falsehood. Let the rest be written by men with youth on their side, in the bloom of learning. To those who would embark on this, if it please them, I give the advice to forge their tongues to grander styles.

Ammianus Marcellinus 31.16.9

Where Ammianus ends, our scholarship begins.[1] The closing words of the *Res Gestae* are eminently quotable and widely quoted. The prologue of the work is lost to us, but this brief sphragis, or authorial 'seal', offers

[1] The bibliography on the sphragis is considerable: for guidance see the surveys of G. Calboli, 'La credibilità di Ammiano Marcellino e la sua arte espositiva', *BSL* 4 (1974)

some compensation, exhibiting in miniature several features conventional in historiographical prefaces: the historian's origins, the extent of the work, the claim to be truthful, and the claim to a place in the canon.[2] In the absence of a preface, this passage has been remarkably successful in dictating the terms of the reception of the *Res Gestae* in literary history, and in raising questions central to the interpretation of Ammianus—the purpose of the lost books, whether and in what sense he was the heir of Tacitus, the impact of the Greek language on his Latinity and of the Greek tradition on his historiography, and whether his silences warp his claim to truthfulness. But the sphragis does not dictate the answers, which have been sharply divergent. Scholarly disagreements have centred above all on the interpretation of his claim to write 'as a former soldier and a Greek' (*ut miles quondam et Graecus*). Some have seen an expression of modesty, with *ut* to be translated 'although';[3] others think that there is an unabashed claim to expertise and learning;[4] modest or not, the claim is also seen as a paradox, in that a simultaneous combination of soldier, Greek, and Latin historian is wholly unexpected.[5] *Miles* has been seen as a claim of allegiance to the tradition of active historians such as Thucydides, Xenophon and Polybius,[6] *Graecus* as a stand for civilisation against barbarism and paganism

67–103, at 71–75; Klaus Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt 1982) 41–48; Francisco-Javier Guzmán Armario, 'El último enigma de Amiano Marcelino: *Ut miles quondam et Graecus* (XXXI, 16, 9)', *BSL* 33 (2003) 542–556. After I had completed this paper, I read François Paschoud's 'Ammien 31,16,9: une recusatio?', now published in *REL* 82 (2004) [in fact 2005] 238–248, and the same author's 'Biographie und Panegyrik: wie spricht man vom lebenden Kaiser?', in: K. Voessing (ed.), *Biographie und Prosopographie* (Stuttgart 2005) 103–118; our arguments coincide on a number of points. I am grateful to the other participants at the Colloquium, especially Daniël den Hengst, for their salutary questions and criticisms; Roger Rees also made valuable comments.

[2] Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae (Paris 1978) 13–29.

[3] Wilhelm Ensslin, *Zur Geschichtsschreibung und Weltanschauung des Ammianus Marcellinus*, Klio Beiheft 16 (Leipzig 1923) 18; John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 461.

[4] Roger C. Blockley, 'Ammianus and Cicero: The Epilogue of the *History* as a Literary Statement', *Phoenix* 52 (1998) 305–314, at 306.

[5] Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 42; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 461.

[6] See Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 455, Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 65–66, and Guy Sabbah, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', in: G. Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Latin Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* (Leiden 2003) 43–84, at 59, for Ammianus as a historian in the Greek tradition.

against Christianity.[7] Scholars have sometimes come close to alleging a formulaic gesture.[8] For myself, I would stress that these words, like the description of the work's scope and the claim of truthfulness, reflect commonplaces of historiographical prefaces. But *miles quondam et Graecus* is not the traditional statement of origin and qualifications; rather, an allusion to such statements, permitting a breadth of interpretation. For my part I should like to read these words as signalling the historian's autopsy and well-informed position on the one hand, combined with his wide scholarship on the other, but I recognise that the statement is open rather than specific.

This essay aims to argue not for the particular and exclusive validity of any among the multitude of interpretations which have been thrust on the sphragis, but rather that, in terms of literary closure, it is in certain definable ways an 'open' ending.[9] In particular I shall argue for the purposed ambiguity of the closing words, in which Ammianus advises his successors 'to forge their tongues to grander styles' (*procudere linguas ad maiores…stilos*), though in this case the contrasting readings can (up to a point) be reconciled. Rather as *miles quondam et Graecus* is broader in meaning than the traditional and exact self-definition ('Thucydides the Athenian'), these words have more purpose than simple imitation of the topos first found in Xenophon ('Thus far let it be written by me. Events hereafter will perhaps be the concern

[7] I. Stoian, 'À propos de la conception historique d'Ammien Marcellin (*Ut miles quondam et Graecus*)', *Latomus* 26 (1967) 73–81, interprets *Graecus* as *Hellēn*, pagan, and is articulately supported by Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 80. Opposition to this viewpoint: Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 44–45 and Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 551 n. 23.

[8] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 455: 'If Ammianus' epilogue is any more than a formal gesture'; 551 n. 23: 'I would only ask how many meanings the phrase can be asked simultaneously to bear'; Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 306: 'if the word *Graecus* is anything more than an ethnic denominator'.

[9] The language of literary closure is embarrassingly imprecise, not least because the word 'closure' itself indicates both the degree to which texts are 'open' or 'closed', and also the 'closed' end of this spectrum. Fowler identified five overlapping meanings of closure, and went on to muse that 'it seems to do more justice to our intuitions to see the tension between "open" and "closed" as one ever present in the literary work. All works leave things undone as well as done; all great works have that paradox at the core of their greatness'; Don P. Fowler, 'First Thoughts on Closure', *MD* 22 (1989) 75–122, at 80 (= Don P. Fowler, *Roman Constructions: Readings in Post-Modern Latin* [Oxford 2000] 239–283, at 243). Though I push a particular argument in this article, I acknowledge that in discussing such matters there is an unusually subjective scale between 'open' and 'closed', and between related poles: optimistic and pessimistic, literary and political, formulaic and manipulative.

of another').[10] I shall confront Roger Blockley's suggestion that these words are simply a literary statement recommending grandiose and allusive historical writing, and argue that the text also has a political animus and implicitly warns that future history must be panegyrical (II).[11] I shall then suggest that this tension is present in the closure of the *Res Gestae* more generally (III). Some of these arguments have been made before, of course, but I believe that I make them in greater detail and more explicitly. Before that, a number of observations, both particular and general, about the sphragis.

First, the text. Our main manuscript, V, offers for the second sentence *scribant reliqua potiores aetate doctrinis florentes*. In the notes of his great edition of 1636, Henri de Valois stated a preference for a comma after *potiores* and inserting *-que* after *doctrinis* ('may more able men write the rest, in the bloom of youth and learning'). This reading, or Clark's adaptation *aetate et doctrinis*, has been preferred by most editors since. Seyfarth's conservative Teubner edition preserves Valois' comma but rejects the emendation which it requires, leaving an ugly asyndeton: *scribant reliqua potiores, aetate doctrinis florentes*.[12] Roger Blockley has seen that both avoidance of the asyndeton and Ammianus' regular prose rhythm make it natural to carry on reading after *potiores*, and has advised the probable and economical solution of placing a comma after *aetate*, thus creating a chiastic word pattern. Ammianus' successors are then 'more able by reason of age, flowering in learning'.[13] Though he does not mention it, Blockley is in fact reverting to the punctuation standard in editions before that of Adrien de Valois in 1681! As I shall discuss below, this interpretation also has the advantage of removing any hint of humility (though in the punctuation proposed by Henri de Valois, any humility is tempered by the following phrase and the possibility of irony).[14]

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[10] *Hellenica* 7.5.27.

[11] Blockley, 'The Epilogue'.

[12] S. Blomgren, *De sermone Ammiani Marcellini quaestiones variae* (Uppsala 1937) 8, defends the asyndeton.

[13] For the construction after *potiores* cf. 28.4.30 *potiores auctoritate longaeva*. As Blockley himself notes ('The Epilogue', 307), the natural temptation to take *aetate* with *florentes* is supported, weakly, by the parallel with Tacitus *Hist.* 2.81.2, where Berenice is *florens aetate formaque*. Support for Blockley's interpretation can perhaps be seen in another sphragis, that of the *Georgics*, where Vergil portrays himself as *studiis florentem ignobilis oti …audaxque iuventa* (4.564–565).

[14] If punctuating after *potiores*, one should still see that word as explained by what

Next, the intertextuality of the passage. The allusions are no random cento, but suggest a consistent strategy. It has been observed that the forceful metaphor of forging a tongue derives from Cicero's *De oratore* 3.121 (*procudenda lingua est*);[15] that *virium…mensura* is a punning play on *aurium mensura* in the same work (3.183); and that Ammianus' claim to truthfulness unblemished by either silence or falsehood glosses Cicero's famous definition of the laws of history (*nam quis nescit primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat? deinde ne quid veri non audeat?*, 2.62).[16] This consistent pattern of allusion to one of the major theoretical works on historical literature has prompted Blockley to call Ammianus an exponent of Ciceronian historiography.[17] In a context where readers are reminded that the work began where Tacitus had ended, prominence can equally be given to two significant echoes of the preface of that author's *Histories*.[18] And though no comparable epilogues survive in Tacitus and the other two canonical Latin historians, Sallust and Livy, Ammianus' closing words inevitably recall the ending of his contemporary Eutropius' *Breviarium*, and are parallelled in closural phrases in a number of other historical writers of the period—Festus, Jerome and the *HA*.[19]

The internal allusions of the sphragis have been little noted. Yet much of the language, such as the antithesis between *veritas* and *mendacium*, is familiar from elsewhere in the *Res Gestae*.[20] The words *opus veritatem professum* are used to contrast the historian's autopsy favourably to literary accounts of Thrace (27.4.2); the metaphor of forging has been used both of Julian's cultivation of his intellect (15.2.8, 16.5.6) and of wicked lawyers preparing their mercenary mouths to battle against

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follows—abler *because* younger and learned. Rolfe's translation (Loeb) is therefore off-key: 'the rest may be written by abler men, who are in the prime of life and learning.'

[15] A metaphor also in Pindar *P.* 1.86.

[16] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 306 and n. 7.

[17] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 313; see further 308–313 and Roger C. Blockley, 'Ammianus and Cicero on Truth in Historiography', *AHB* 15 (2001) 14–24, at 21–24. Blockley also argues ('The Epilogue', 306 and nn. 7–8) for further Ciceronian tinges in the language of the sphragis.

[18] Tacitus refers to himself as among those *incorruptam fidem professis* (1.1): cf. *opus* ***veritatem professum*** *numquam…silentio ausus* ***corrumpere*** *vel mendacio*. Note that *fides* is for Ammianus a virtual synonym of *veritas* (on the nuances of meaning see Sabbah, *La méthode*, 19–23). The words which introduce Tacitus' second paragraph, *opus aggredior opimum casibus*, are echoed by *id…aggressuros* (the only other usage of *aggredior* for a literary *opus* which I have found is Frontinus *Strat.* 1.pr.3).

[19] See Section II below.

[20] E.g. 15.2.9, 16.7.3, 31.5.10.

truth (30.4.13). Still more significant is the intra-textual relationship with other programmatic passages, especially the prefaces of 15 and 26. The sphragis is concerned with proclaiming the work's truthfulness and with signalling the threats to it, of silence and falsehood; similarly in 15.1.1 Ammianus warns of the risks to truth posed by brevity and in 26.1.1–2 both of unspecified dangers close to truth and of some readers' obsession with minutiae.[21] All three passages appear to speak of the stylistic care needed for historical writing, and all three self-consciously act as dividing points in the text. In 15.1.1 there is the distinction between the preceding narrative, already based on autopsy and interviews, and the greater polish of the Julianic books that will follow (*residua, quae secuturus aperiet textus, limatius absolvemus*); the preface of 26 begins by noting the careful writing hitherto (*Dictis impensiore cura rerum ordinibus ad usque memoriae confinia propioris*) and ends with the decision to continue (*ad residua narranda pergamus*). The sphragis also shows itself a dividing point (*haec…ad usque Valentis interitum*), but the decision to go on is here replaced by an exhortation to others (*scribant reliqua*). One could point to other verbal echoes between the three passages.[22] It has often been assumed that the sphragis alluded to the lost preface to the whole work: the conjecture makes sense of the features characteristic of prefaces such as the historian's origin and the scope of his work, of the allusions to the preface of Tacitus' *Histories*, and of the natural inference from the words *opus veritatem professum* that the historian had made such a profession at the beginning.[23] Speculative reconstruction of the preface would be pointless, but a succession of internally connected historiographical mission statements from preface to sphragis seems a plausible assumption. It is likely that, when the work survived entire, the sphragis offered a marked echo of the start of the work, as well as a series of subsequent prefaces. In purely formal terms, this probably created a strong closural effect.

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[21] See Blockley, 'Ammianus and Cicero on Truth', 16–17.

[22] Passing over the obvious connections between the two prefaces, and focusing simply on the verbal relationship of the sphragis with the two other texts, I note 15.1.1 *pro virium captu*—31.16.9 *pro virium mensura* (the latter adapting the former phrase to a final context); 15.1.1 *ea quae videre licuit per aetatem*—31.16.9 *scribant reliqua potiores aetate*; 26.1.2 *stilis uberibus explicatas*—31.16.9 *explicavi* (another closural word)…*ad maiores…stilos*.

[23] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 13–14. The tendency of historians to define themselves as continuators within a canonical superstructure means that historical prologues and epilogues are likely—in principle—to show more marked similarities than the ring composition of other genres.

## II. *The Grand Style*

Taking up the narrative where a distinguished predecessor had left off is a tradition of Greek and Latin historiography as far back as Thucydides.[24] Ammianus' reminder of his continuation of Tacitus, reinforced by the verbal echoes of the prologue of the *Histories*, argues for his own place in the canon. Reference to his successors also avers his canonical status. It seems straightforward, therefore, to view the passage as a proud summation of the historiographical tradition to which Ammianus adheres and a recommendation of it to the historians of following generations. This view has recently received the support of Roger Blockley, whose interpretation is accepted in Sabbah's Budé translation.[25] Blockley argues strongly against finding any humility in the tone of this conclusion.[26] Comparison to usage elsewhere in the work shows that Ammianus' writing as a Greek, for example, is a claim to scholarship: the historian Timagenes is described as 'Greek in thoroughness and language' (*et diligentia Graecus et lingua*, 15.9.2). The parenthetical *ut arbitror* is 'an indication…of the author's tendency towards Ciceronian argumentation'.[27] Blockley asserts that in Ammianus' usage the plural *stili* (literally 'pens') should mean not 'a style' but 'authors'.[28] So in the closing sentence, he proudly advises his historiographical successors to adopt his own practice, by forging their prose on the classic models. This advice provides a signpost for, and is exemplified by, the allusions of the passage. As was argued above, there is clear intertextuality both with Cicero's *De oratore* and with Tacitus' *Histories*; the suggestion that there is also a reminiscence of Vergil's *maius opus moveo* (*Aen.* 7.45), the words with which Ammianus had marked Julian's ascension to power (15.9.1), may not be off the mark.[29] Blockley translates: 'Those who, if it should please them, are preparing to approach this task I advise to forge their tongues in accordance with the greater pens [i.e. writers]'.[30] Sabbah's rendering is more elegant: 'Mais quand ils s'attaqueront, s'il

[24] John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge 1997) App. 6–7.

[25] Blockley, 'The Epilogue'; Guy Sabbah with notes by Laurent Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome VI, Livres XXIX–XXXI* (Paris 1999) 159 and n. 590.

[26] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 308.

[27] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 306.

[28] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 308.

[29] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 308.

[30] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 308.

leur plaît, à cette tâche, je leur conseille de frapper leur langage au coin des meilleurs auteurs'. As so often throughout the *Res Gestae*, Ammianus here proclaims the grandeur of history.

Blockley's reading is not without problems. *Stili* as a metonymy for writers is not a well-attested usage, though found elsewhere in Ammianus (*geographici stili*, 23.6.13, *veteres…stili*, 27.4.2), and he is wrong to assert that *stili* must refer only to writers but not to what we would call styles of writing. Several passages clearly show that such certainty is misplaced, among them one in the preface to book 26 (a passage which, I have already suggested, is an important intertext for the sphragis): *haec quidam veterum formidantes cognitiones actuum variorum stilis uberibus explicatas non edidere superstites* (26.1.2) ('fearing this [i.e. the aggressive complaints of contemporaries] some of the ancients who had unfolded interpretations of various deeds in fertile style did not publish them in their lifetimes.'). *Stili* here cannot mean authors.[31] It can also be objected that Blockley's translation of *ad* as 'in accordance with' strains the meaning of the preposition, and that *procudere ad* should be followed by the new shape into which the *linguae* are beaten, which argues for translating 'styles' rather than 'authors'.[32] Ammianus' use of metaphor is typically forceful and innovative. Though *stilos* will inevitably be translated by one or the other metonymy as 'writers' or 'style(s)', the Ciceronian metaphor of forging, sharpening, or hammering out a tongue is well suited to its primary meaning of a metal writing implement—almost suggesting an image of 'hammering tongues into pens'. However, even if Blockley has erred and *procudere linguas ad maiores…stilos* must here be rendered as 'to forge their tongues to greater ways of writing', the passage can and should still be interpreted as recommending the imitation of great writers.[33]

A further threat to Blockley's reading of the final sentence, as the recommendation of historiographical prose crafted by allusion, comes from another apparent allusion, to a work far more popular and influential than that of Tacitus or Ammianus. The *Breviarium* of Roman history by Eutropius was published in ca. 370, and soon found considerable success, including translation into Greek. In 70 pages it covers all

[31] Here I am anticipated by Paschoud, 'Ammien 31,16,9', 240–241.

[32] Paschoud, 'Ammien 31,16,9', 242.

[33] Cf., for instance, Gell. 3.3.13 *stilum Plautinum* for the identification of a *stilus* with a particular author. In this case the preceding allusions suggest possible examples of 'grander styles'.

of Roman history from the foundation by the brothers Romulus and Remus to the death of Jovian in 364. Eutropius stops at that point, because he has come to the accession of the brothers Valentinian and Valens (10.18.3):

> *quia autem ad inclutos principes venerandosque perventum est, interim operi modum dabimus. nam* ***reliqua stilo maiore*** *dicenda sunt. quae nunc non tam praetermittimus quam ad maiorem dicendi diligentiam reservamus.*
>
> But because we have reached our famous and revered princes, for a time we shall call a halt to our work. For the rest must be told in a grander style. This we do not now so much pass over as save for composition with greater care.

This is usually read as a refusal to write about the ruling emperors on the grounds that it requires expansion both of scale and of rhetoric to the levels of panegyric.[34] The narrative is abruptly cut off (for the time being) with the accession of the new emperors, and *maiore stilo* suggests a move to a *grande genus dicendi*, and imitates the panegyrist's traditional statement of unworthiness. The correctness of this interpretation is confirmed by an allusive letter written to Eutropius by Symmachus after the deaths of Valentinian and Valens (*Ep.* 3.47): he lavishes praise on Gratian and asks if he does not write *panēgyrikōteron*, more encomiastically, than the humble genre of the letter demands. Making his *recusatio* he protests that *res maximae magnos hiatus oris requirant*, and that Eutropius should be the first to render these events with his *stilus*. The allusion to the concluding *recusatio* of the *Breviarium*, and the suggestion that Eutropius compose a continuation, make it very clear that *maiore stilo* meant 'panegyrically'. And the same passage of Eutropius is equally clearly echoed by Ammianus[35]—a fact which has suggested a markedly different interpretation of the passage to Blockley's. For Ammianus'

[34] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 455: 'no literary successor could tackle the present age until, with the death of the reigning emperor, it had vacated the field of panegyric for that of authentic history.' Peter Heather, David Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius* (Liverpool 2001) 219 n. 37: 'the historian—reasonably—considered that the rule of a reigning emperor (as Theodosius still was when Ammianus wrote) could only be addressed by panegyric: the truthfulness demanded by history was likely to conflict with political expediency.'

[35] It would be hard to ascribe the verbal similarity in the final sentences of both works to chance, and Ammianus has other allusions to the closing chapters of Eutropius: Amm. 25.9.9 – Eutr. 10.17.1; 25.9.11 – 10.17.2; 25.10.13 – 10.18.1 (though Den Boeft et al. ad loc. are equivocal on whether these are genuine allusions); 27.6.15 – 10.16.3; 27.6.16 – 8.9.2.

younger successors 'to forge their tongues to grander styles' is for them to write of the current reign in panegyrical form.

This is a somewhat surprising allusion. Given the tension in Ammianus between *maiores stilos* implying 'grand literary history' and implying 'panegyric', it is understandable that scholars have tried to minimise or neutralise the allusion, by considering it just a fanciful and meaningless piece of lexicographical ransacking,[36] a compliment to Eutropius,[37] or an 'oblique reference (…no more than this) to panegyric'[38]—understandable but unconvincing. The best way of casting doubt on the specific allusion is to argue that it represents a topos, found in a number of authors of the fourth century—though this only reinforces the argument for a general allusion to panegyric. Festus, who wrote soon after Eutropius, concludes the narrative of his *Breviarium* with Jovian's humiliating surrender of Nisibis, and ends as follows (30.1–2):[39]

> *quam magno deinceps ore tua, princeps invicte, facta sunt personanda! quibus me licet imparem dicendi nisu et aevo graviorem parabo. maneat modo concessa dei nutu et ab amico, cui credis et creditus es, numine indulta felicitas, ut ad hanc ingentem de Gothis ⟨victoriam⟩ etiam Babyloniae tibi palma pacis accedat.*
>
> Thenceforth with how great a voice should your deeds, unconquered prince, resound! I shall prepare myself for them though unequal to the task of speaking and weighed down by age. Let only that good fortune remain, granted by God's will and allowed by that friendly deity in whom you trust and to whom are entrusted, so that to this great victory over the Goths you may add the palm of peace in Babylon.

Here we have an even more abrupt ending before the current reign, and again a temporary refusal to continue on the grounds of the higher style needed—and in addition, like Ammianus, a plea of old age. An adaptation—and subversion—of the topos ends the preface of Jerome's *Chronicle*, which he has taken up to 378.

> *quo fine contentus reliquum temporis Gratiani et Theodosii latioris historiae stilo reservavi, non quo de viventibus timuerim libere et vere scribere (timor enim dei hominum timorem expellit), sed quoniam dibacchantibus adhuc in terra nostra barbaris incerta sunt omnia.*

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[36] Blockley, 'The Epilogue', 308. It is methodologically curious that Blockley, who has made so much of Ammianus' intertextuality, rejects this blatant and prominent allusion.

[37] W. Klein, *Studien zu Ammianus Marcellinus*, Klio Beiheft 13 (Leipzig 1914) 8.

[38] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 455.

[39] The word *victoriam* in the last sentence is my conjectural supplement.

> Content with this ending I have saved the rest of Gratian and Theodosius' time for the style of broader history, not because I should fear to write freely and truthfully about the living (for fear of God drives out the fear of men), but because with the barbarians still running amok on our territory all is uncertain.

And the *Quadriga Tyrannorum* in the *Historia Augusta* (late 390s?) ends with the topos, here used as part of the pretence to be writing under the Tetrarchs (15.10).

> *supersunt mihi Carus, Carinus et Numerianus. nam Diocletianus et qui sequuntur stilo maiore dicendi sunt.*
>
> Carus, Carinus and Numerian are left to me. For Diocletian and those who come next must be told in a grander style.

All of these cases occur in final positions, and like Ammianus, coincide with an ending before the current reign—which rules out the possibility that Ammianus is simply counselling his historiographical heirs to reject breviary, a genre which he disprized at 15.1.1. One possible way of rejecting reference to panegyric is adopted by Klaus Rosen, who employs Jerome's reference to *latioris historiae stilus* to argue that Ammianus' reference is to the grander style of detailed history rather than to panegyric—but here, as with his claim that he is not afraid to speak truthfully and freely about the living, Jerome subverts the expectation that he will refer to panegyric.[40]

It is impossible, therefore, to evade the fact that Ammianus alludes to Eutropius, or to a broader commonplace of which Eutropius is representative, and it seems unreasonable to reject either the reference to historical successors or that to panegyric. One possible solution would be to reconcile them. There is no absolute dichotomy between them, and one could see a suggestion that the current reign deserved to be related as a panegyrical history. There were historical narratives in Late Antiquity which covered the present reign, and did so in quasi-panegyrical fashion: one thinks of the coverage of Constantine in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* or in the lost work of Praxagoras of Athens (Photius, *Bibl.* 62), or of Constantius II in Aurelius Victor. Though Ammianus wrote only of deceased emperors, he claimed his narrative of Julian as almost approaching material for encomium (16.1.3), and went closer to true panegyric in narrating the campaigns of the ruling emperor's father, Count Theodosius (27.8, 29.5). But this reconciliation does not

[40] Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 47.

remove the antithesis between seeing *maiores stili* as a reference to history based on grand models and as a recommendation of panegyric. In the first interpretation, Ammianus proudly recommends his own truthful, dignified, and allusive method to his historical successors, whenever they might choose to write: 'I have told the truth and written a grand canonical history, and I recommend the same to my successors'. In the second case, he alludes to a conventionally humble conclusion and appears to suggest that his younger contemporaries should write in a manner unlike, and higher than, his own. The second and third sentences of the epilogue contrast with, rather than develop, the first.

The implications of this contrast can, in my view, resolve the conflict between history and panegyric. Ammianus' stress on his work's truthfulness makes his apparent recommendation of panegyric awkward: it was, after all, a genre with an uneasy relationship to truth. A rising young rhetorician who prepared an imperial panegyric in 386 later pithily summarised the prospect: 'I was to tell many a lie, and be favoured for lying by those who knew I was lying' (Augustine, *Confessions* 6.6.9).[41] I suggest, then, that the allusion to panegyric is ironical. Ammianus implies that he has written the truth, but those who write the rest may sully it with the lies and silences characteristic of panegyric. This finds support in the changed nature of the topos of *recusatio* in Ammianus. He lacks the modesty of the other authors, or any suggestion that he had himself written in a humbler style. Moreover, Eutropius, Festus and Jerome all see the present reign as something which they may return to at a later date. Ammianus does not even make this formal gesture of willingness to continue, or praise the current reign—that will be a task for others.[42]

Reading the allusion to panegyric as ironical allows it coexist in its implications with the more obvious meaning of the text. 'My successors *should* write grand history as I have done (but perhaps would find it advantageous to adopt the "higher style" of panegyric).' And the language of the passage, when examined closely, confirms that Ammianus has carefully avoided excluding either possible reading. Blockley's attempt to exclude the sense 'styles' or 'ways of writing', as opposed

[41] *…cum pararem recitare imperatori laudes, quibus plura mentirer, et mentienti faveretur ab scientibus.*

[42] As Ammianus' sphragis echoes the preface of Tacitus' *Histories*, it is also worth comparing Tacitus' formal willingness (1.1) to contemplate covering Nerva and Trajan in old age—though old age took him in the opposite direction; Sabbah, *La méthode*, 18.

to 'writers', from *stilos*, has been shown to be unconvincing and his refusal to engage with the allusion to Eutropius has been shown to be misguided; and, in any case, the plural follows naturally from the plural *linguas*, just as at 26.1.2 various authors' *cognitiones… stilis uberibus explicatas* naturally involved a series of plural nouns.[43] The singular (*ad maiorem stilum* or *maiore stilo*) would have allowed less equivocal, perhaps exclusive allusion to panegyric, but Ammianus avoided it. The words used by the historian for his successors' writings and the period they will cover (*id*, *reliqua*) are not generically specific and could apply equally to historians and panegyrists, while the ambiguous verb *moneo* could be seen as 'advice' to the first, and 'warning' to the latter. Finally we may observe that the parenthetical phrase *si libuerit*, 'if that should be pleasing', fits well with a view that Ammianus is doubtful about whether his successors will exist or write history as he understands it.

## III. *After Ammianus*

I have suggested that the last words of the sphragis are open to two contrasting inferences about what lies beyond the end of the *Res Gestae*, and—less straightforwardly—that instead of choosing one and standing by it, or attempting to reconcile them, we should accept the contradiction. An apparently proud conclusion inviting qualified successors to continue the history is partially undermined by an allusion which seems pessimistic about both historiography and the period. I intend now to broaden my approach to examine more generally how the *Res Gestae* portrays or refers to events beyond its end. In doing so, I am interacting with existing debates on the *Res Gestae*, whether Ammianus was an optimist,[44] and in what ways 'the time of writing', the dominance of Theodosius, impacts on the *Res Gestae*—or to put the matter more crudely, whether Ammianus displays or implies opposition to the regime.[45]

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[43] Here again I am anticipated by Paschoud, 'Ammien 31,16,9', 248.

[44] John F. Matthews, 'Ammianus and the Eternity of Rome', in: C. Holdsworth, T.P. Wiseman (eds.), *The Inheritance of Historiography* (Exeter 1986) 17–29, and *The Roman Empire*, 470–472; see by contrast Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 184–187.

[45] See for example E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 87–120; R.L. Rike, *Apex Omnium: Religion in the Res Gestae of Ammianus* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1987) 134–137.

It is the last hexad, especially book 31, which offers the most important passages and on which I shall focus here.[46] The preface to book 26 is the first in a series of programmatic passages which at once promote contemporary history on the grand scale, and exhibit doubts about it. 'It would have been fitting to draw back my foot from events better known.'[47] Ammianus gives two reasons for this, avoidance both of the 'dangers often associated with truthfulness', and of those critics who 'cry out as if injured' if trivialities are omitted. This combination of doubts over mostly unspecific perils and the inadequacy of present and future audiences recurs in interventions across the last hexad. The preface to book 28, discussed in this volume by Jan den Boeft, uses an exemplary parable to display fears about the potential reaction of his audience to the quasi-theatrical portrayal of their own woes; and when a few sentences later the critics of his narrative reappear, objecting to the exclusion of important events, he retorts that not everything that occurs among low persons is worthy of historical record (28.1.15). The difficulties of history are increasingly thrust at the readers: so is their own inadequacy. The complaints about readers at the start of books 26 and 28 have metamorphosed by 31.5.10 to 'those who will read this, if any there ever will be', *id lecturos (si qui erunt umquam)*.[48] Without dwelling on these passages at any length, I suggest that one way in which they

[46] Not that study of closure precludes looking at the earlier parts of a work of literature, as Fowler points out, or the *Res Gestae* in particular; Don P. Fowler, 'Second thoughts on closure', in: D.H. Roberts, F.M. Dunn, and Don P. Fowler (eds.), *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (Princeton 1997) 3–22, at 21 (= Fowler, *Roman Constructions*, 284–307, at 306). One might exemplify specifically with the intratextual relationship of 15.1.1 with the sphragis.

[47] I see no worth in the belief still propagated in handbooks that the start of 26 represents a break in the composition or publication of the *Res Gestae*; it is better to read the preface of 26 and other similar passages in the subsequent books as sophisticated presentations of historiographical problems; see C.W. Fornara, 'The Prefaces of Ammianus Marcellinus', in: M. Griffith, D. Mastronarde (eds.), *Cabinet of the Muses: Studies in Honor of T.G. Rosenmeyer* (Atlanta 1990) 163–172; Blockley, 'Ammianus and Cicero on truth', 16. Moreover, the evidence for both the last hexad and the earlier surviving books combines to suggest completion at some point between late 389 and mid 391; C.P.T. Naudé, 'The date of the later books of Ammianus Marcellinus', *AJAH* 9 (1984 [= 1988]) 70–94; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 22–27. For a different view see Paschoud, 'Biographie und Panegyrik', 111–118.

[48] Compare a passage at the start of the first Roman digression which is often quoted alongside this one (*et quoniam mirari posse quosdam peregrinos existimo haec lecturos forsitan, si contigerit*, 14.6.2). Rather than complaining of the paucity of readers, it prepares for the central conceit of the following digression, which amuses its Roman audience by portraying their faults to foreigners.

deserve to be read is as movement towards closure, to a situation where reading has stopped. Similarly, a pessimistic intervention such as the promise to deal selectively (*carptim*) with the narrative of the Gothic invasion 'if we come to that too' (*si ad ea quoque venerimus*, 30.2.8) is not a sign that Ammianus did not know how far he would take the history. The doom of Valens had been portended from early in the last hexad.[49] Rather the words figure the historian's and reader's approach to the end of the history as a journey in confusing and difficult territory.[50]

These pessimistic interventions have often been linked to supposed political constraints on what Ammianus could report. E.A. Thompson's suggestion—in a work composed during the Second World War—that Ammianus was subject to censorship in the last hexad may overstate the case.[51] It is, however, blatantly obvious and universally acknowledged that Ammianus, for whatever reason, displays great concern with differentiating the period of his history from the reign of Theodosius. The normal problem of where to end a work of history was exacerbated by a plurality of emperors. Gratian's reign as senior Augustus in the West (375–383) overlapped with that of Theodosius (379–395). Rather than narrate only the first few years of Gratian's rule, Ammianus' solution was to finish his narrative of Western events at the end of book 30 after the death of Valentinian I, and to devote book 31 almost entirely to events leading up to Valens' death at Adrianople in 378.[52] The omens at the start of the book all point to the battle. Ammianus eschews his normal geographical range. The only Western events recorded are Gratian's campaigns against the Lentienses (31.10.1–19), which had a material influence on the outcome at Adrianople. Valens, jealous of his nephew's success, engaged with the Goths at Adrianople without waiting for him. Eastern events are also ruthlessly culled, unless relevant to Adrianople: Valens' peace with Persia gets one sentence (31.7.1), and a major uprising in Isauria and a Saracen revolt are omitted altogether.[53] Most notoriously, such an approach also enabled him

[49] Gavin A.J. Kelly, 'Ammianus and the Great Tsunami', *JRS* 94 (2004) 141–167, at 163.

[50] Cf. the imagery of first person interventions in the later books: *ut in tenebrosis rebus confusione cuncta miscente* (29.1.24); *velut in Cimmeriis tenebris reptabamus* (29.2.4).

[51] Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 108–120.

[52] The tension created by this dividing point can be seen in the failure to record the execution of Maximinus, as promised at 28.1.57. Other foreshadowings of Gratian's reign come at 27.6.15 and 30.10.6.

[53] See Noel Lenski, 'Basil and the Isaurian Uprising of A.D. 375', *Phoenix* 53 (1999)

to leave out the awkward facts of Count Theodosius' execution in the winter of 375–376. But there are other gaps. We hear long beforehand that Count Maurus would fail in battle at the pass of Succi (20.4.18), but this defeat is not mentioned when he is appointed to the relevant command (though it is implied, 31.10.21). And it has recently been plausibly suggested that the younger Theodosius was recalled from Spanish retirement well before Adrianople.[54] Ammianus' silence is no argument against this: indeed it is entirely unsurprising to hear nothing of it.

A feeling which has often struck readers, that book 31 is a separate unit within the larger hexad, is confirmed by an examination of cross-references.[55] Books 26–30 are particularly dense in explicit references forward to the late 370s and 380s, after the end of the *Res Gestae* (excluding doubtful cases, I count thirteen),[56] and there are also abundant details which call to mind—and exhibit mixed feelings about—that later period. These include the campaigns of Theodosius' father (27.8, 29.5), the discovery by conspirators using a ouija-board that the next emperor's name would begin THEOD- (29.1.32), an early military success of Theodosius with an admiring allusion to his imperial future (29.6.15), and an implied criticism of Theodosius' religious policy in Valentinian's obituary (30.9.5).[57] Specific references or hints about the future cease almost completely in book 31. Apart from one ambiguous case which will be discussed later, there is only one forward reference—the unshattering information that Munderichus was later *dux limitis Arabiae* (31.3.5). Above all nothing is said about the Gothic war after 378—though Ammianus does include events after Adrianople (31.15–16), yet another indication that the real dividing point is not the death of Valens but the accession of Theodosius.

One might, therefore, analyse the last book as containing two distinct narratives, which converge at Adrianople.[58] One is the story of Valen-

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308–329, esp. 314. The forward reference at 26.8.9–10 to Aliso's death in Isauria may well refer to an event during this revolt.

[54] R.M. Errington, 'The accession of Theodosius I', *Klio* 78 (1996) 438–453.

[55] See, for instance, Roger C. Blockley, 'Ammianus Marcellinus' Use of *Exempla*', *Florilegium* 13 (1994) 53–64 on the different style of *exempla* in book 31, and Sabbah, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', 49, repeating the suggestion that book 31 is extraneous to the structure of the *Res Gestae*.

[56] 26.3.5, 26.5.14, 26.7.2, 26.8.9–10, 27.5.10, 27.6.1–2, 28.1.57, 28.2.5, 28.6.25, 29.2.16, 29.6.15, 30.3.6–7, 30.10.6.

[57] Discussed in David Hunt's article in this volume.

[58] It will be obvious that my rhetorical strategy here is influenced by Rowland Smith, 'Telling Tales: Ammianus' Narrative of the Persian Expedition of Julian', in: Jan Willem

tinian and Valens, begun in book 26 and here brought to a firm and rounded close with the long-portended death of Valens. In this narrative, it is quite natural to insert occasional references to subsequent events, when (for example) individuals who were reaching the pinnacle of their career at the time of writing were mentioned. The other narrative exists only in book 31, and tells of the Gothic war, a story of incompetence with its climax, like that of the first story, at Adrianople. This narrative is analytical and avoids glimpses of future events. Despite this, it is startlingly unclosed in comparison to the first.[59] There is no indication that the Goths would formally surrender to the Roman state in 382. This narrative does not end at Adrianople, but continues until the Goths have given up their attack on Constantinople and the *magister militum* Julius has massacred Gothic recruits in the East.

The omission of details of the Gothic war after 378 does not mean that Ammianus was unconcerned. As recent studies make admirably clear (and as will be developed below), Ammianus was closely engaged with the responses of his contemporaries to the disaster of Adrianople: providentialist explanations,[60] what to make of the original response to the Goths in 376,[61] how to assess the behaviour of individual military officers and the emperor himself in the run-up to and during the battle.[62] Actual allusion may be hard to find, but an awareness of debate is unarguable. To give just one example: in 384 or 385 Themistius claimed that the Goths were worse than Hannibal (*Or.* 34.22): magnification of the scale of the disaster was part of the official line used to justify the peace of 382. Ammianus' assertion that this was the most disastrous battle in Roman history except Cannae (31.13.18–19) engages directly with Themistius' *exemplum*, if not his text.[63] The only fault I

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Drijvers, David Hunt (eds.), *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York 1999) 89–104.

[59] In its lack of closure my second notional narrative is reminiscent of works to which it has sometimes been compared, the monographs of Sallust; David S. Levene, 'Sallust's *Jugurtha*: An "Historical Fragment"', *JRS* 82 (1992) 53–70.

[60] Noel Lenski, '*Initium mali Romano imperio*: Contemporary Reactions to the Battle of Adrianople', *TAPA* 127 (1997) 129–168, at 154–155.

[61] Heather, Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire*, 201, observe that Ammianus' description of learned flatterers (*eruditis adulatoribus*, 31.4.4) praising Valens for obtaining so many recruits 'brings Themistius immediately to mind', and speculate that we may have an oblique reference to a now lost speech given before Valens at that time.

[62] Lenski, '*Initium mali Romano imperio*', 145–152.

[63] Lenski, '*Initium mali Romano imperio*', 162. Klaus Rosen, 'Wege und Irrwege der römischen Gothenpolitik in Ammians 31. Buch', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*

can find in the analyses of Rosen and Lenski is a tendency to accept Ammianus' portrayal of himself as a moderate, calmly refuting both the complacent and the calamitous assessments of his contemporaries.[64]

This engagement can best be explored in a place where the tension between my two notional narratives becomes stark. The sphragis claims that the work has been taken *ad usque Valentis interitum*, but the immediately preceding pages have covered events subsequent to Valens' death. The contradiction invites thought about the place of these last two chapters in the work.[65] I shall focus in particular on the two episodes which conclude the narrative, the Barbarian attempt on Constantinople and the massacre of Goths in the Eastern cities. These two stories can both be read as possible, perhaps competing, attempts at an ending.[66]

The Goths made an attempt on Constantinople, but were thoroughly outbarbarised by a Saracen on the Roman side, who, all-but-naked, ran berserk into their ranks and sucked blood from the neck of a slaughtered Goth. They were also daunted by the sheer size of the city, and 'having taken greater losses than they dealt, they departed thence to pour out over the northern provinces, which they wandered at will as far as the roots of the Julian Alps (of old called "Venetian")' (31.16.6–7).[67] Those who view Ammianus as fundamentally optimistic about the future will think that the skirmish at Constantinople shows the turn of the tide, with the Gothic attack checked and diffused (and I am willing to accept that the conclusion to the work is not unremitting negativity). Against this, the final image of the Goths wandering

(Amsterdam 1992) 85–90, at 86, notes an interesting parallel between Themistius *Or.* 15.197a and Amm. 31.5.14.

[64] Lenski's '*Initium mali Romano imperio*' shows a tension between recognition of Ammianus' engagement and viewing him as a closural, summarising figure in the history of responses to Adrianople. The relevant section of his article—the last before the conclusion—is entitled 'Historical Corrective'. The choice of a latish date for the composition of book 31, around 394, obviously contributes to this second reading.

[65] The sphragis of Vergil's *Georgics* is again a point of comparison: *Haec super arvorum cultu pecorumque canebam, / et super arboribus…* (4.559–560). Here as in similar summaries elsewhere in the poem, the subjects of the first three books are listed, while the apiculture and the Aristaeus-Epyllion of book 4 are omitted, encouraging the reader to question the role and relevance of these passages in the work as a whole.

[66] Compare the end of book 19 (which also appears to be the end of a hexad), where there are two balanced but contrasting annalistic notices, brilliantly analysed by Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 92–93.

[67] *post accepta maiora funera quam illata, exinde digressi sunt effusorie per arctoas provincias, quas peragravere licenter ad usque radices Alpium Iuliarum, quas Venetas appellabat antiquitas.*

the Balkans at will (*licenter*) depicts a situation which had endured for the dozen or so years before Ammianus wrote. The official line, closely reflected in the panegyrics of Themistius and Pacatus, stressed Theodosius' achievement of peace in 382, and his success in turning the Goths into farmers.[68] Not all were convinced. Despite their formal *deditio*, the Goths were accepted as a virtually independent nation within the empire's frontiers; the peace was not bloodless;[69] and doubts as to its reality or permanence surface in many contemporaries. Ammianus is closer to these. One may cite remarks such as Ambrose's in the commentary on the Gospel of Luke (usually dated to the late 380s): 'we too have been made exiles from our fatherland in Illyricum by the exiling of the Goths and no end is yet to come' (*in Luc.* 10.10).[70] Or Jerome in a letter of 396 (*Ep.* 60.16):[71]

> My mind shudders to come to the ruins of our age: for twenty years and more, Roman blood has been spilt every day between Constantinople and the Julian Alps… The Roman world is collapsing and yet we do not bend our haughty necks.

A further hint at Ammianus' own doubts comes earlier in book 31 (it might be counted as one of that book's very few forward-references), in a description of the battlefield of Ad Salices in 377. Unburied bodies were consumed by birds of prey, 'as is shown by the plains which even now are white with bones' (*ut indicant nunc usque albentes ossibus campi*, 31.7.16). This evocative passage has often been thought to imply the historian's eyewitness testimony, and its allusiveness to Vergil and Tacitus has also been noted; but the unburied bones can equally be read as a token of the enduring nature of the Gothic problem.[72] If this reading is accepted, it is worth noting that political criticism hides behind an allusion. Criticism is similarly concealed, I have argued, in the ambiguous allusion to Eutropius which closes the entire work; similarly too, the last sight of the Gothic army, wandering the Balkans at will (31.16.7) is

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[68] E.g. Pacatus *Pan.* 2.22.3.

[69] For example, the Greuthungi, a group of Goths outside the empire, were defeated trying to force their way over the Danube in 386, and a Gothic band came close to killing Theodosius in an ambush in 391 (Zos. 4.48–49).

[70] *nos quoque in Illyrico exules patriae Gothorum exilia fecerunt et nondum est finis.*

[71] *horret animus temporum nostrorum ruinas prosequi—viginti et eo amplius anni sunt, quod inter Constantinopolin et Alpes Iulias cotidie Romanus sanguis effunditur… Romanus orbis ruit et tamen cervix nostra erecta non flectitur.*

[72] Gavin A.J. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge forthcoming) Ch. 1.

entirely justified by the formal terminus, but nevertheless manages to produce an ending that alludes to common criticisms of the regime.

The last event described in the *Res Gestae* is the swift and salutary efficiency of Julius, a Roman *magister militum*, in arranging for Roman officers to massacre the Gothic recruits stationed across the cities of the Eastern provinces (31.16.8). Closural aspects have again been pointed out, not least in the return of the narrative *trans Taurum* towards the office of the *magister militum* in Antioch, where the former soldier and Greek had begun his military career.[73] It has plausibly been argued that the massacres, which are vaguely situated 'in these days' (*his diebus*), may belong in 379, many months after any other event narrated—which, if true, would mean that this episode's concluding position was forcefully contrived.[74] The historian is strident in his praise of Julius, whose action is lauded as exemplary.[75]

Julius' drastic solution was not imitated and was not the basis of Roman policy. Ammianus was not alone in promoting genocide, however. Themistius had to defend the peace of 382 against those who called for massacres (*Or.* 16.211a). Approval for a policy of extirpation

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[73] Sabbah, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', 52, neatly side-stepping questions about Ammianus' origins. Julius is elsewhere attested as active in Antioch, though comparison to Eunapius and Zosimus has sometimes led to doubts about the precise geographical location of these events. Guzmán Armario, 'El último enigma', 553, proposes that the name of Julius could remind readers of the centrality to the work of another *miles et Graecus*, Julian.

[74] Constantine Zuckerman, 'Cappadocian Fathers and the Goths', *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991) 473–486, at 481–486; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 185–186. The divergences between Eunapius *frg.* 42 (Müller, Blockley), Zosimus 4.26 and Ammianus have been much debated, and I do not propose to pursue the argument here. Suffice it to say that Ammianus' inclusion of the event is carefully calculated and edited, and that it seems rash to give automatic privilege to his imprecisely dated account over Zosimus, who lacks Ammianus' obvious agenda but has circumstantial detail aplenty. See Paschoud ad Zos. 4.26 (388–391, n. 154); S. Elbern, 'Die Gotenmassaker in Kleinasien', *Hermes* 115 (1987) 99–106; Hagith Sivan, 'Ammianus' Terminus and the Accession of Theodosius I', in: Ursula Vogel-Weidemann, Jan Scholtemeijer (eds.), *Charistion C.P.T. Naudé* (Pretoria 1993) 113–120. The last has an interesting theory on Theodosius' accession, on which I shall not comment, but part of her conclusion deserves quotation (118): 'At the risk of ending with an anticlimax, Ammianus chose to end with the story of Iulius. Writing, as he did, at least a decade after the events, he was able to gauge the merits and failures of the emperor's Gothic policy. Direct criticism was clearly too risky. But as far as Ammianus was concerned, the only solution to the Gothic problem was that adopted by Iulius… By concluding with a bloody massacre rather than with a story of peaceful settlements, the aged soldier expressed his dissatisfaction with current imperial policies.'

[75] *efficacia Iulii magistri militiae trans Taurum enituit salutaris et velox.*

of the Goths is also implied by a series of *exempla* earlier in the book. At 31.5.11–17, Ammianus corrects the misconception of those people who in their ignorance of history thought that the Roman state had never before seen such ills (a gibe at the tendency of apologetic panegyrists).[76] He offers a detailed and chronologically ordered series of *exempla*, with the Teutones and Cimbri in the second century BC, the Marcomanni under Marcus Aurelius, and the third century invasions: in each case the Romans had recovered from the loss of leaders and armies to achieve the defeat and utter extirpation of their enemies. This series of *exempla*, like the work as a whole, is strikingly deficient in a formal conclusion on the current situation—but in the middle of the passage, dealing with Marcus' reign, comes the remark that 'sober antiquity was not yet infected by the softness of a more dissolute lifestyle' (31.5.14).[77] It was not that the scale of the threat was greater after Adrianople, but that the response was inadequate.[78] Ammianus carefully manipulates his formal terminus to leave us with a contrasting pair of vignettes: the Balkans overrun by the Goths and the East saved from them by mass murder.

## IV. *Conclusion*

I have argued that we should accept (with reservations) Blockley's argument that Ammianus ends by recommending grand historiography to his successors, and also the argument which he rejects, that the final words allude clearly to panegyric and convey a negative view of the current regime. On a formal level the sphragis and the immediately preceding passages offer sharp closure and there is a sharp distinction in formal terms between the narrative of book 31 and later events; matters extraneous to the Gothic war have been excluded, as have details which might specifically call to mind Theodosius' reign. At the same time, Ammianus in several places uses an absence of closure to let readers infer his views about the later prosecution of the Gothic war, views which differ starkly from the official line as expressed in contemporary panegyric. In particular, the fact that he does this in the last two paragraphs of the narrative before the sphragis gives cause to think

[76] Lenski, '*Initium mali Romano imperio*', 143–145.
[77] *nondum solutioris vitae mollitie sobria vetustas infecta.*
[78] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 175–177.

that the final sentence alludes meaningfully to the tradition that historians should leave the ruling emperor to panegyrists. Taking cover behind the formality of an epilogue, behind recommendation of his great achievement, and behind ironic exaltation of the younger generation, he hints strongly at his own disapproval of the panegyrists' narrative of the present reign, and at his doubts for the future of truthful historiography.

It may not have escaped notice that the jarring duplicity of meaning and implications proposed here is consistent with recent interpretations of Ammianus. For nothing has the pagan historian been more admired than for his tolerant attitude to Christianity; yet it is argued, convincingly to my mind, that he was a militant pagan, who denigrates Christians through ironic juxtapositions and polemical silence, whilst making strenuous—and, in the view of most readers, successful—efforts to appear even-handed.[79] The stark contrast in the epilogue between surface meaning and the implications of a forceful allusion is therefore characteristic of the work as a whole.

Edward Gibbon was an acute reader of Ammianus, and it is fitting to end with his adaptation of this epilogue for his own leave-taking from his 'accurate and faithful guide' in Chapter xxvi of *The Decline and Fall*:

> Ammianus Marcellinus, who terminates his useful work with the defeat and death of Valens, recommends the more glorious subject of the ensuing reign to the youthful vigour and eloquence of the rising generation. The rising generation was not disposed to accept his advice, or to imitate his example.

This is a brilliant and perceptive reading. For John Matthews, Gibbon's reference to 'the more glorious subject of the ensuing reign' imports an irony absent from Ammianus.[80] My argument above would suggest rather that Gibbon elucidates Ammianus' irony. Gibbon also captures the poignancy which Ammianus' epilogue has for modern readers, because it marks the end of the tradition of Classical historiography in Latin. When he noted the failure of 'the rising generation… to accept [Ammianus'] advice or to imitate his example', he was perhaps wrong (Sulpicius Alexander and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus appear to have written Classicising Latin histories of the following generations,

[79] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, esp. 79–94.

[80] John F. Matthews, 'Ammianus' Historical Evolution', in: Brian Croke, Alanna M. Emmett (eds.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney/London 1983) 30–41, at 30.

now lost).[81] But he was certainly justified in the lament which follows for the deterioration of his sources thereafter. To the detriment of his own narrative, Gibbon, like Roman historians since, had to rely on the later Church historians and their equally partisan pagan counterpart Zosimus, on fragments and chronicles, and on Theodosius' panegyrists. Ammianus' sphragis exalts his achievement and embodies his pride in continuing a great bilingual historiographical tradition; he recommends it to worthy successors, but anticipates the possibility that there will be none.

[81] François Paschoud, 'Note sur les relations de trois historiens des IVe et Ve siècles: Sulpicius Alexander, Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, et Olympiodore', *AntTard* 6 (1998) 313–316.

# III

# CRISIS OF EMPIRE

# *ET NE QUID COTURNI TERRIBILIS FABULAE RELINQUERENT INTEMPTATUM…* (AMM. MARC. 28.6.29)*. DIE GÖTTIN DER GERECHTIGKEIT UND DER COMES ROMANUS

Sigrid Mratschek

*Abstract*: Ammianus' staging of the Lepcis Magna affair gives an otherwise provincial issue a universal dimension, as well as the atmosphere of a tragedy. In the conflict between the *magister equitum* Theodosius and the *comes Africae* Romanus, Iustitia failed in her duty to watch over Rome. However, Ammianus rallies to her flag, and, just as in a theatre, raises the curtain on the political stage in order to unmask the circle of Theodosius' anonymous enemies. His historical construction, which contrasts the myth of the emperor Julian with that of the immortal and victorious general Theodosius, is intended to help forge a new common identity after the catastrophe of Adrianople. It also provides an insight into the mutual influence of politics and literature—with the result that Ammianus sheds his legendary reputation as the ‚lonely historian'.

## I. *Einleitung: Theater und Theatralik bei Ammian*

Tacitus schildert die qualvollen Vorbereitungen zu einer öffentlichen Rezitation. Wie bei einer Theatervorstellung kamen nicht nur persönliche Freunde, sondern ein größeres geladenes Publikum: ‚(Ein Autor) fühlt sich selbst gezwungen, zu bitten und zu werben, damit sich nur Leute finden, die ihm zuzuhören geruhen. Und auch das nicht ohne Kosten; denn er mietet ein Haus, läßt einen Hörsaal einrichten, Sitzbänke entleihen und Programme verteilen.'[1] Ammian, der offenbar als Fremder aus Antiochia aus Rom ausgewiesen worden war, stellte sich

* Zentrale Aussage, in der sich Ammians Geschichtskonzeption, bestehend aus tragischer Wirkung (*coturnus terribilis*) und dramatischem Handlungsgeflecht (*fabulae*), verdichtet. Zur Begrifflichkeit in der antiken Dramentheorie und zu den methodisch exakten Übersetzungsvarianten siehe S. 260f. mit Anm. 80 und 82. Mein Dank gilt Altay Coşkun (Trier) für die spontane Zusendung seines noch unpublizierten Artikels und meinen Kollegen für die vielfältigen Anregungen, die ich vom NIAS in Wassenaar mitgenommen habe.

[1] Tac. *Dial.* 9.3. Siehe Jocelyn P. Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind. Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (London/New York 1997[2]) 40.

dieser Herausforderung. Er fesselte sein Publikum mit der Theatralik spannender Momentaufnahmen, als er 391 die ersten Partien las, die auf Kaiser Julian, den Helden einer glanzvollen Vergangenheit, zugeschnitten waren.

Ammian erzählt keine Geschichte, er inszeniert Geschichte. Als Kette blutbefleckter Taten (*hic textus cruentus gestorum*)[2] läßt er seine eigene Zeitgeschichte auf der Bühne des politischen Geschehens Revue passieren. Bewußt gibt der Historiker in den letzten Büchern 26–30 das annalistische Gliederungsprinzip zugunsten einer dramatischeren thematischen Erzählweise und einer Anordnung nach Schauplätzen auf:[3] Dem Stil des Sublimen entsprechend konzentriert er sich auf die Höhepunkte der Ereignisse (*negotiorum celsitudines*) und vernachlässigt unbedeutende Personen (*squalidae personae*).[4] Dann fällt der Vorhang—nicht weil die Tragödie aus ist, sondern weil der Autor als letzter Zeuge einer untergehenden Welt an dem Schnittpunkt zweier Epochen steht: Eingeleitet von einer Serie wechselvoller Katastrophen (*volubilium casuum diritate*) mit dem beklagenswerten Tod Julians (*exitu luctuoso*),[5] hat die alte Welt mit der Schlacht von Adrianopel, in der Kaiser Valens und zwei Drittel der Feldarmee des Ostens untergingen, ihr furchtbares Ende gefunden. Die neue Zeit bricht mit einem Hoffnungsschimmer an, der auf jeden Tiefpunkt römischer Geschichte folgt und stets von *duces amplissimi* wie den beiden Theodosii ausgeht.[6] Nur vor dem Hintergrund einer solchen, auf Kommunikation mit einem Publikum aus Zeitzeugen angelegten, psychagogischen Inszenierung ist Geschichte bei Ammian zu verstehen.[7]

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[2] 28.1.2 mit der Stilfigur der Enallage.

[3] 28.1.15.

[4] 26.1.1, 31.5.10 und 28.1.15. Siehe Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae (Paris 1978) 25–26 und Glenn W. Most, ‚After the Sublime. Stations in the Career of an Emotion', *YR* 90 (2002) 101–120, 104–109; vergl. die Definition des Theatralischen bei Angelos Chaniotis, ‚Theatricality beyond the Theatre. Staging Public Life in the Hellenistic World', *Pallas* 47 (1997) 219–259, bes. 222.

[5] 26.1.3.

[6] 31.5.11–14, bes. 12: *sed post inflictas rei Romanae clades immensas ultimis proeliis per duces amplissimos superati*. Siehe John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 472 und John F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court AD 364–425* (Oxford 1975; repr. 1990) 382–386; anders Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 184. Beachte Theodosius den Älteren, *amplissimus ductor* (29.5.45), seinen Sohn, *magister militum* 378.

[7] Ron F. Newbold, ‚Nonverbal Communication in Tacitus and Ammianus', *AncSoc* 21 (1990) 189–199; Sabbah, *La méthode*, Kap. XV ‚L'historien et son public', 507–539

## II. *Ammians ‚Schweigen'*

Der Beifall des Publikums veranlaßte Ammian, seine Geschichte bis zur Gegenwart fortzusetzen, versicherte sein Mitbürger Libanios, der um 380 selbst eine prominente Persönlichkeit in der Gesellschaft von Antiochia war.[8] Aber Ammians eigentliches Motiv ist weniger vordergründig; es hängt mit dem Erlöschen der valentinianischen Dynastie und der neuen Machtkonstellation unter Theodosius zusammen, in der auch die letzte Partie seiner *Res Gestae* entstand. Der narrative Fokus wandelt sich in dem Moment, als der *protector domesticus*, der vor Julians Tod aktiv in die Historie verwickelt war, in Antiochia durch Momente intensiven, aber passiven Miterlebens zum Sympathisanten der Opfer der valentinianischen Dynastie wird.

Eines der späten Opfer—es bleibt unklar, ob noch von Valentinian oder schon von Gratian—war Theodosius' Vater, der gleichnamige *magister equitum*. Der junge Theodosius diente in dessen Stab, bevor er 373/4 sein erstes selbständiges Kommando als *dux Moesiae* erhielt. Seine Karriere war abrupt zu Ende, als sein Vater im Winter 375/6 des Hochverrats verdächtigt, verhaftet und ohne formale Anklage und Prozeß in Carthago hingerichtet wurde.[9] Aber die Ereignisse sind, wie Hartmut Leppin mit Recht festgestellt hat, schwer zu rekonstruieren.[10] Als Theodosius der Ältere 376 ermordet wurde, war niemand bereit, die Umstände seines Todes zu verraten, und als sein Sohn drei Jahre später nach dem Purpur griff, wurden sie vertuscht. Hieronymus, der ungefähr fünf Jahre nach dem Ereignis schreibt, behauptet, daß andere ‚sehr prominente Persönlichkeiten' im gleichen Jahr wie Theodosius getötet wurden.[11] Zwei Manuskripte von Hieronymus' *Chronik* enthalten

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und Frank Wittchow, *Exemplarisches Erzählen bei Ammianus Marcellinus* (München/Leipzig 2001) 27–29.

[8] Lib. *Ep.* 1063.2: τοῦ φανέντος ἐπαινεθέντος μέρος ἕτερον εἰσκαλοῦντος. Amm. Marc. 26.1.1. John F. Matthews, ‚The Origin of Ammianus', *CQ* 44 (1994) 252–269 revidiert Fornaras These und erhärtet die Identität Ammians mit Marcellinus, dem Korrespondenten des Libanios.

[9] R. Malcolm Errington, ‚The Accession of Theodosius I', *Klio* 76 (1996) 438–453, bes. 443 und 446 gegen Alexander Demandt, ‚Der Tod des älteren Theodosius', *Historia* 18 (1969) 598–626, bes. 605–607 und andere.

[10] Hartmut Leppin, *Theodosius der Große. Auf dem Weg zu einem christlichen Imperium* (Darmstadt 2003) 32; John F. Matthews, ‚Symmachus and the *magister militum* Theodosius', *Historia* 20 (1971) 122–128, 124 (repr. in: Idem, *Political Life and Culture in the Late Roman Society* [London 1985]); Stephen Williams, Gerard Friell, *Theodosius. The Empire at Bay* (London 1994) 23–24.

[11] Hier. *Chron. a.* 376 (GCS 47, 248 c): *Theodosius, Theodosii postea imperatoris pater, et*

eine Glosse, die nicht zu Hieronymus' ursprünglichem Text gehört, aber glaubwürdig zu sein scheint:

> Theodosius, der Vater des späteren Kaisers Theodosius, berühmt durch seine Siege in vielen Kriegen auf der ganzen Welt, starb in Africa durch eine *factio* aus denjenigen, die bald darauf selbst getötet wurden, darunter der ehemalige Präfekt Maximinus und alle übrigen.[12]

Der ältere Theodosius hatte Maximinus' Schwager in Britannien hinrichten lassen, als er einen Aufstand plante,[13] aber bis auf diese eine Ausnahme blieben seine Feinde anonym.

Ammian schweigt über Theodosius' Tod, signalisiert aber in anderem Kontext, daß eine Auslassung den Leser ebenso täuschen kann wie eine Fiktion.[14] Sein Schweigen ist berühmt und hat lange seine Interpreten verwirrt. Er selbst hat sein Publikum darauf hingewiesen, daß der ‚kluge Leser' auch das in Betracht ziehen soll, was verschwiegen wird, und ihm die Lücken in seinem Bericht über die *crimina* und *consiliorum pravitas* verzeihen soll, die entstanden, um übertriebene Anschuldigungen zu vermeiden.[15] Aber wer könnten die anonymen Feinde des Theodosius gewesen sein und um welche Schuldzuweisungen handelte es sich? Solche Einzelheiten sind prädestiniert, Neugier zu wecken.

Ammian versteht sich als unpopulären Verkünder einer Tragödie, vergleichbar dem Untergang von Milet für die Athener. Er wählt das

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*plurimi nobilium occisi.* Oros. *hist.* 7.33.7: *comes Theodosius, Theodosii qui post imperio praefuit pater…instimulante et obrepente invidia iussus interfici.*

[12] *Chron. Min.* 1.631, vergl. Die Chronik des Hieronymus, ed. Helm p. XVIII: *Theodosius, Theodosii postea imperatoris pater, multorum per orbem bellorum victoriis nobilis, in Africa factione eorum perimitur, qui et ipsi mox caesi sunt: item Maximinus ex praefecto et ceteri.* Siehe Errington, ‚The Accession of Theodosius I', 446 und Demandt, ‚Der Tod des älteren Theodosius', 559–560.

[13] 28.3.4 (*res perniciosas…et novas in Theodosium*); 28.3.6 (*letalis poena*). Zos. 4.12.2 (F. Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle* 2.2 (*Livre IV*) [Paris 1979] 354–355, n. 127) nennt ihn statt Valentinus (*PLRE* I, Valentinus 5) zutreffend Valentianus, Barbara Saylor Rodgers, ‚Merobaudes and Maximus in Gaul', *Historia* 30 (1981) 82–105, 83 irrtümlich Valentius.

[14] 29.1.15: *Et quia fallere non minus videtur, qui gesta praeterit sciens, quam ille, qui numquam facta fingit.* Zu Ammians Auslassungen und Einflüsterungen François Paschoud, ‚Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst und H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 67–84, 83–84.

[15] Arnaldo D. Momigliano, ‚The Lonely Historian Ammianus', *ASNP*, ser. III, IV/4 (1974) 1393–1407; jetzt in: Idem, *Sesto Contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Bd. 1, Storia e letteratura 149 (Rom 1980/1988) 143–157, 147 sieht sogar das Motto des ganzen Werkes in 29.3.1: *quisquis igitur considerat, perpendet etiam cetera, quae tacentur, veniam daturus ut prudens, si non cuncta complectimur, quae consiliorum pravitas crimina in maius exaggerando commisit.* Es gab keine ‚conspiration du silence'; anders E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 93–95.

Pathos (*tumor tragicus*) des Dichters Phrynichos für seine protreptische Historiographie, um seine Zuhörer durch die Erzeugung starker Emotionen zu warnen und, im Sinne der aristotelischen Katharsislehre, zu neuen Einsichten zu bewegen: Bei Kaiser Theodosius dürfte er damit Erfolg gehabt haben.[16] Liest man Ammians Zeitgeschichte wie den letzten Akt einer Tragödie, enthüllen sich nach und nach nicht nur die Mechanismen valentinianischer Politik, sondern auch bisher nicht aufgeklärte Hintergründe für den plötzlichen Tod des älteren Theodosius. Die Aktivitäten der Hintermänner entfalten sich wie die *fabulae* im Stil einer Tragödie mit einem Höhepunkt nach der Theateraufführung, wenn der Vorhang gefallen ist.[17] Dahinter standen jener *comes* Romanus, den Theodosius während seines Feldzuges in Africa hatte verhaften lassen, und seine Freunde. Die Ursache sah der Historiker in der undurchdringlichen Hierarchie und den weitreichenden Netzwerken dieser hochgestellten Amtsträger. Kombiniert mit dem Zeugnis des Hieronymus, hilft uns die dramatische Fantasie des Autors, die *factio* der anonymen Feinde des älteren Theodosius zu rekonstruieren. Ihre Zusammensetzung war den Zeitgenossen—anders als Hieronymus, der seit 372 im Osten weilte,[18] und dem modernen Leser—bekannt.

## III. *Die Feinde des älteren Theodosius und der Iustitia*

Die historischen Ereignisse sind bestens recherchiert.[19] Was fehlt, ist die Frage, warum Ammian sie so und nicht anders inszeniert hat. Programmatisch *schreibt er sich* mit seiner historischen Konzeption in den politischen Diskurs über ‚den Nutzen der Gerechtigkeit' *ein*, der

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[16] 28.1.4. Vergl. Arist. *Poet.* 1449 b 24–28. Zu Theodosius' Reaktion siehe *Epit.* 48.11–12: *multumque diligens ad noscenda maiorum gesta. E quibus non desinebat exsecrari, quorum facta superba crudelia libertatique infesta legerat ut Cinnam Marium Syllamque atque universos dominantium, praecipue tamen perfidos et ingratos*. Die Klimax *atque universos dominantium* verleiht dem Katalog republikanischer *exempla* von Cinna bis Sulla zeitlose Gültigkeit für alle Epochen und alle tyrannischen Herrscher, auch in der Kaiserzeit.

[17] 28.6.29, siehe unter V. Zur Bühnenmetapher und Ammians Mimesis Ramsay MacMullen, ‚Some pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus', *The Art Bulletin* 46 (1964) 435–455, bes. 452; Guy Sabbah, ‚Ammianus Marcellinus', in: Gabriele Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden/Boston 2003) 43–84, bes. 80–81; vergl. Chaniotis, ‚Theatricality beyond the Theatre', 220 zur wachsenden Popularität der Theatralik.

[18] J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome. His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London 2000) 36ff.

[19] B.H. Warmington, ‚The Career of Romanus, Comes Africae', *ByzZ* 49 (1956) 55–64; Alexander Demandt, ‚Die Tripolitanischen Wirren unter Valentinian I', *Byzan-*

auch die Christen in einem anderen, mehr philosophischen Kontext bewegte. Anklänge wecken Erinnerungen an die berühmte Passage aus Sallusts *Catilina* (10.1): ‚Sobald aber der Staat sich durch Leistung und Gerechtigkeit vergrößert hatte…begann das Schicksal zu wüten und alles durcheinanderzubringen. So wuchs zuerst das Verlangen nach Geld, dann nach Macht.'[20] Ciceros Disputation (*Rep.* 3.24–28), die die Frage ‚für oder wider die Gerechtigkeit' bei der imperialen Politik des römischen Staates aufwarf, sollte nach der Eroberung Roms 410 eine Neuauflage erfahren durch Augustinus; aber wer sagt, daß nicht schon vorher außenpolitische Niederlagen wie Adrianopel ähnliche Assoziationen heraufbeschwören konnten?[21]

Iustitia, die Personifikation des menschlichen, in der Rechtsprechung konkretisierten Rechts, der Augustus eine Statue geweiht und kultische Ehren erwiesen hat, spielte auch unter den Herrschertugenden des Theodosius und in Ammians Geschichtskonzeption als *excellentissima virtutum omnium* eine zentrale Rolle.[22] Ihre Züge nimmt, wie Paschoud gezeigt hat, bei Ammian die *providentia* an.[23] Die Göttin, im Mythos eine Tochter der Zeit, schützt das Imperium Romanum in dem Maße, als es das respektiert, was gerecht ist. Sie tritt bei Ammian immer dann als

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*tion* 38 (1968) 333–363; Linda-Marie Günther, ‚Die „Leptis-Magna-Affäre" bei Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVIII 6)', *Klio* 79 (1997) 444–458; Altay Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus, der Heermeister Theodosius und die drei letzten Akte der „Lepcis-Magna-Affaire" (A. 373–377)', *AntTard* 12 (2004) 293–308; Claude Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire* II. *Notices d'histoire municipale* (Paris 1981) 354–362; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 383–387.

[20] 14.1.1. Zum Einfluß Sallusts siehe Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 32.

[21] August. *C.D.* 19.21: *Disputatur certe acerrime atque fortissime in eisdem ipsis de re publica libris adversus iustitiam pro iustitia.*

[22] Zur *iustitia* Kaiser Julians 20.8.11, des Theodosius *CIL* 9.333. Ihre Hochschätzung hat in der römischen Historiographie keine Parallele: 31 mal erwähnt in 17 Büchern Ammians, siehe François Paschoud, ‚Justice et providence chez Ammien Marcellin', *Hestíasis. Studi di tarda antichità offerti a Salvatore Calderone*, Studi Tardoantichi 1 (1986) 139–161, 159; Axel Brandt, *Moralische Werte in den Res gestae des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Göttingen 1999) 274–295, 421. Nicht nur ‚an elaborate literary gesture' (Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 427), vergl. die zahlreichen Referenzen auf juristische Verfahren bei John F. Matthews, ‚Ammianus on Roman Law and Lawyers', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst und H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 47–57, bes. 47–48. Zur *Iustitia Augusta* siehe *Fast. Praen.* zum 8. Jan. 13 n.Chr. CIL I$^2$, p. 231 (*signum Iustitiae Augu[stae dedicatum Planco] et Silio cos.*); *CIL* 6.2250 (*sacerdos Iustitiae* in Rom); 9.4133 (Statue in Aequiculi); 9.5890 (Weihinschrift in Ancona), Buecheler, *CLE* 867 (Altar mit *Nemesis* und den *Fata* in Capua). Siehe Paschoud-B., ‚Iustitia dea', TLL VII 2.1 (1956–1970) 715 und Kurt Latte, ‚Iustitia', in: *RE* 10.2 (1919) 1339.

[23] Paschoud, ‚Justice et providence chez Ammien Marcellin', 160.

dea ex machina auf, wenn sich Katastrophen im historischen Verlauf anbahnen: Ihre Tochter Adrastia, die ‚Unentrinnbare', oder Nemesis ist im Unterschied zu ihr als *regina causarum, arbitra rerum ac disceptatrix* die Personifikation der aktiv wirkenden göttlichen Kraft des Rechts, die das Weltall regiert und das Schicksal der Menschen lenkt.[24] Wer sich gegen sie vergeht, wird von den Geistern der Toten (*manes*) oder Rachegöttinnen (*dirae*, *Furiae*) heimgesucht. Theatralische Erbauung und ausgleichende Gerechtigkeit werden ebenso von der Gottheit wie von den irdischen Mächten erwartet. Es liegt nahe, daß Iustitia und Adrastia, die jenen den Tod bringen, die für den Tod anderer verantwortlich sind, in dem Machtkampf zwischen dem Feldherrn Theodosius und seinen Kontrahenten eine entscheidende Funktion zukommt.

Über die Geschichte nach Julian hat Ammian ein Netz geworfen, das in Gestalt der beobachtenden und rächenden Göttin der Gerechtigkeit die Parallelwelten der Provinzen mit Rom und dem Kaiserhaus verbindet. Entsprechend könnte Tacitus' Motto aus den *Historien* (1.3.2) als Leitmotiv auch vor Ammians letzten Büchern stehen: ‚Niemals wurde durch schrecklichere Unglücksfälle des römischen Volkes oder gerechtere Zeichen bestätigt, daß sich die Götter nicht um unsere Sicherheit (*securitatem nostram*), wohl aber um unsere Bestrafung (*ultionem*) kümmern.' Der Gotenkrieg Ammians wird in den *Res Gestae* ebenso als *ultio deum* für menschliches Fehlverhalten gedeutet wie der Bürgerkrieg des Jahres 69 in den Historien. Dieses Fehlverhalten offenbart sich lange vor Adrianopel, als eine Katastrophe die andere ablöst.

Den Auftakt bildet Bellona, die Rom, die ewige Stadt, in Brand setzt und bei den Magieprozessen in Kleinasien geradezu von Iustitia mobilisiert wird.[25] Noch bevor der Bericht einsetzt, stellt Ammian für den *prudens*, der zwischen den Zeilen liest, die poetische Gerechtigkeit her,

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[24] 14.11.26. Adrastia-Nemesis verkörpert das *ius quoddam sublime numinis efficacis* und ist *fatis praesidens* (14.11.25). Auf den doppelten Aspekt als *ultrix* und *substantialis tutela* sowie den engen Zusammenhang zwischen ihr und *fatum* verweisen Jacqueline Amat, ‚Ammien Marcellin et la Justice immanente (14,11,20–34)', in: Louis Holtz und Jean-Claude Fredouille (éds.), *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, Bd. 1 (Paris 1992) 268–279; Fritz Graf, ‚Adrasteia', in: *Der Neue Pauly* 1 (1996) 129–130; Paschoud, ‚Justice et providence chez Ammien Marcellin', 159–161; Wittchow, *Exemplarisches Erzählen*, 192 ff.

[25] 28.1.1: *saeviens per urbem aeternam urebat cuncta Bellona ex primordiis minimis ad clades excita luctuosas*; 29.2.20: *namque caesorum ultimae dirae perpetuum numen* (i.e. *Iustitiam*) *ratione querellarum iustissima commoventes Bellonae accenderant faces*. Siehe Petra Riedl, *Faktoren des historischen Prozesses. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Tacitus und Ammianus Marcellinus* (Tübingen 2002) 365.

als er Flavius Maximinus einführt: Eine Metapher charakterisiert den Hauptverantwortlichen für Theodosius' Tod als eine in den Tiefen der Erde umherkriechende Schlange, die nur auf die passende Gelegenheit wartet, tödliches Unheil heraufzubeschwören.[26] Maximinus, wie Valentinian und Valens ein Pannonier, hatte sich als *praefectus annonae* und Vikar der Stadt unbeliebt gemacht, als er 369–371 in Rom eine Prozeßwelle gegen Senatoren und andere Prominente in Gang setzte, deren Dauer und Ausmaß von den Augenzeugen dramatisiert werden.[27]

Beide, Ammianus und Symmachus, schildern die Atmosphäre der Stadt als buchstäbliches Terrorregime: Die soziale Ordnung war erschüttert. Einem Bühneneffekt vergleichbar ließ Ammian die ‚Trompeten innerstaatlicher Katastrophen' ertönen und nahm die Reaktion der stadtrömischen Massen vorweg: Sie erstarrten vor Entsetzen zum Tableau vivant angesichts der schrecklichen Vorgänge.[28] Ein Gerichtsstillstand (*iustitium*) und nicht eine gerichtliche Untersuchung (*iudicium*) stand zu befürchten.[29] In einem solchen Ausnahmezustand, einer Periode der Staatstrauer,[30] wurde die Tätigkeit der Gerichte ausgesetzt, so daß nur der unumschränkte Befehl und Gehorsam galten. Die Göttin der Gerechtigkeit, die das Goldene Zeitalter regiert und angesichts von Mord und Totschlag die Flucht ergreift, hat Rom verlassen.[31] Ein Echo erklingt in Pacatus' *Panegyricus* auf Theodosius, der das gleiche Bild des *iustitium* von der Schreckensherrschaft des Usurpators Magnus Maximus entwirft.[32]

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[26] 28.1.7: *postremo, quod tamquam subterraneus serpens per humiliora reptando nondum maiores funerum excitare poterat causas.*

[27] Aus Sopianae (28.1.5). Zur Datierung und zur Kluft zwischen Historizität und Darstellung siehe Altay Coşkun, ‚Die Ämterlaufbahn des Pannoniers Maximinus und die Chronologie der Römischen Prozesse unter Kaiser Valentinian I. (Amm. 28,1)', *AHB* 17 (2003) 5–16, bes. 12–16.

[28] 28.1.14: *Iamque lituis cladum concrepantibus internarum rerum atrocitate torpentibus cunctis.* Zu solchen Bewegungen der Massen in der Spätantike siehe MacMullen, ‚Some pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus', 445, 454.

[29] 28.1.15.

[30] So 19.1.10.

[31] Bei Dichtern, z.B. Germ. 104 = *Arat.* 105 (*aurea…regeret cum saecula…iustitia*); Ov. *Fast.* 2.249 (*iustitiam facinus mortale fugerat*); Verg. *G.* 2.474 (*iustitia excedens terris*); Petr. 124.253 (*terram relinquit crine soluta iustitia*), vergl. Paschoud, ‚Iustitia dea', 715. Claudian (*In Ruf.* 1.363–364, *Theod.* 119–120) identifiziert sie mit *Virgo Astraea*, die als letzte die Erde verließ, vergl. Alan Cameron, *Claudian, Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford 1970) 461–462.

[32] *Pan. Lat.* 2.24.2: *illud lustrale iustitium.* Siehe C.E.V. Nixon, Barbara Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1994) 479, Anm. 84; Sigrid Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola. Kommunikation*

Wie auf der Bühne folgt ein Szenenwechsel. In der Ferne kündigten die Rachegöttinnen neues Unheil an[33] und lenken die Aufmerksamkeit mit einer Reihe neuer Schauplätze in Syrien, Kleinasien und Africa auf die Provinzialpolitik der Kaiser. Gleich bei ihrem ersten Auftritt präsentiert Ammian schlaglichtartig den immanenten Gegensatz zwischen den späteren Kontrahenten im Kontrast der Charaktere: Theodosius dem Älteren eilte sein Kriegsruhm voraus und weckte glänzende Erwartungen.[34] Er wurde durch Vergleiche mit den Helden der Republik als neuer Furius Camillus und Papirius Cursor zum Sieger und Retter Roms in Britannien stilisiert.[35] Für den 364 zum *comes Africae* beförderten Romanus stand Sallusts Catilina Pate.[36] Der Oberkommandierende aller Truppen der Diözese Africa war vorausschauend und geschickt in Täuschungsmanövern, aber ein Musterexemplar an Trägheit und Habgier. Wegen Theodosius führten die britannischen Provinzen Freudentänze auf, während Romanus durch seine *saevitia morum* so verhaßt war, daß die Göttin der Gerechtigkeit die Leiden der Africa Tripolitana beweinte.[37]

Erinnerung verklärt, verformt und verdrängt.[38] Romanus übertraf angeblich die Barbaren im Verwüsten der Provinz—unter dieses Motto stellte Ammian die tripolitanische Affäre.[39] Der Keim zum Konflikt zwischen Romanus und den Kurialen von Lepcis Magna lag in einem Hilfegesuch der Stadt, die von Raubzügen der Austorianer, libyscher Wüstennomaden mit dem Namen Laguatan, heimgesucht wurde.[40] Als

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*und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen*, Hypomnemata 134 (Göttingen 2002) 86–89.

[33] 28.2.11 (über Syrien): *At procul tamquam horum similia cientibus Furiis.*

[34] 27.8.3: Theodosius der Ältere als *officiis Martiis felicissime cognitus…praeeunte fiducia speciosa.*

[35] 28.3.9.

[36] In der Charakterzeichnung, nicht im Wortlaut. Vergl. 27.9.1 mit Sal. *Cat.* 5.

[37] Theodosius' Popularität (*favor omnium*) erstreckte sich auf alle sozialen Schichten, siehe 28.3.9; vergl. die Partizipalkonstruktion *tripudiantesque relinquens provincias*. 28.6.1 (über Romanus): *…Tripoleos Africanae provinciae…aerumnas, quas, ut arbitror, Iustitia quoque ipsa deflevit.*

[38] Johannes Fried, *Der Schleier der Erinnerung. Grundzüge einer historischen Memorik* (München 2004) bes. 105: ‚Erinnerung ist stets Gegenwart, nie Vergangenheit. Sie ist Schöpfung, Konstrukt.'

[39] 27.9.1–2: *saevitia morum multis…exosus hac praecipue causa quod superare hostes in vastandis provinciis festinabat.* Er besaß Kollegen wie den Prokonsul Rusticus Iulianus, der ‚so gierig nach Menschenblut war wie ein wildes Tier' (27.6.1).

[40] Ammian (28.6.1) kombiniert Bild und Realität des Brandes: *Quae unde instar exarsere flammarum, textus aperiet absolutus.* 28.6.3 über Stachao (*supplicio flammarum*); 4 über die Umgebung von Lepcis (*incenso supellectili multa*); 5 über den aufwallenden Zorn der

Gegenleistung verlangte der *comes Africae* Verpflegung für seine Armee und 4000 Kamele. Das sind umgerechnet 100 Kamelkarawanen und 600 Tonnen Proviant, und er zog ab, als seine Forderung nicht erfüllt wurde.[41] Dahinter verbargen sich jahrelang vernachlässigte Versäumnisse der *possessores*, die ihrer Pflicht zur Entrichtung der *annona* für die Kastelle am *limes Tripolitanus* nicht nachkamen, und nicht, wie uns Ammian glauben macht, die Passivität des Befehlshabers. Ein Gesetz vom Mai 365 an den Vikar von Africa spielt auf das betrügerische Einverständnis der Steuereintreiber, der *tabularii*, an.[42] Eine Beschwerde des *concilium Tripolitanum* beim Kaiser scheiterte 365/6 an dem undurchdringlichen Netz des Romanus, dessen Kontakte bis in die Führungsspitze reichten. Remigius, der *magister officiorum*, war nicht nur sein Verwandter (*affinis*), sondern auch sein Verbündeter (*rapinarum particeps*).[43] Nachdem die Petition des Romanus, die Angelegenheit an den Vikar und ihn selbst zurückzuverweisen, keine Aussicht auf Erfolg mehr hatte, wurde die Untersuchung immer wieder vertagt, ‚wie man gewöhnlich hochgestellte Amtsträger zugunsten der Inanspruchnahme der noch Mächtigeren hinters Licht führt'.[44]

Während die Gesandtschaften zwischen Carthago und dem Kaiserhof hin- und herreisten, machten die Berber einen Raubzug nach dem anderen. Es gelang Romanus, sein Militärkommando über die Provinz Tripolitana, das 366 kurzfristig dem *praeses* Ruricius übertragen worden war, zurückzuerhalten,[45] und den kaiserlichen Sonderkommissar Palladius, der die Vorgänge in Lepcis Magna aufklären sollte, zu instrumentalisieren.[46] Obwohl er unter der Führung der Kurialen Erechthius

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Barbaren (*barbaricus tumor*). Zu dem Volksstamm David J. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (London 1995) 173–175, 177–180 und Günther, ‚Leptis-Magna-Affäre', 452.

[41] Ammian (28.6.5) spricht von *commeatus abundans*. Zur Berechnung des Proviants siehe Günther, ‚Leptis-Magna-Affäre', 454.

[42] *Cod. Theod.* 11.1.11. Siehe Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 281–282, Mattingly, *Tripolitania*, 177 und Günther, ‚Leptis-Magna-Affäre', 453–456.

[43] Romanus kam den Lepcitanern durch Eilboten zuvor, Remigius stellte dem Kaiser die Sache anders dar; siehe 28.6.8.

[44] 28.6.9: *eo more, quo solent inter potiorum occupationes ludi potestates excelsae*. Die Alliteration legt den Genetivus subiectivus nahe, der *potiores* mit *potestates* kontrastiert. Eine Alternative wäre, *potiorum* als Neutrum von *potiora* und Genetivus obiectivus aufzufassen wie z. B. Seyfarth: ‚inmitten ihrer Beschäftigung mit wichtigeren Angelegenheiten'.

[45] 28.6.10–11. Ammian erklärt nicht, *wie* Romanus das gelang, siehe Demandt, ‚Tripolitanische Wirren', 348; ferner Mattingly, *Tripolitania*, 182.

[46] H.C. Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores. An Inquiry into Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire* (Amsterdam 1985) 155 s. v. Palladius.

und Aristomenes eine Inspektionsreise durch die verwüstete Provinz machte,[47] kam Palladius in seiner *relatio* an den Kaiser zu dem Ergebnis, daß die Beschwerden gegen den *comes Africae* unberechtigt seien.[48] Als einzige Erklärung bot sich—wie Ammian zutreffend folgert—eine Kollaboration (*concordia*) zwischen Romanus und dem kaiserlichen Beamten an. Der *tribunus* und *notarius* ließ sich, kaum daß er Africa betreten hatte, mit dem Donativ bestechen, das für die in Africa stationierten Soldaten bestimmt war.[49] Sein Geldtransport hatte nur die Funktion gehabt, Romanus' Freunde als ebenso korrupt darzustellen wie ihn selbst.[50] Oder, um es in Ammians Worten zu sagen: Die Ungerechtigkeit war in Africa allgegenwärtig.[51]

Die Klimax scheint 369/70 im Strafgericht Kaiser Valentinians erreicht, wodurch das vom Unglück verfolgte Tripolis endgültig zum Schweigen gebracht wurde.[52] Den Kurialen Erechthius und Aristomenes sollte als Delatoren die Zunge abgeschnitten werden, der *praeses* Ruricius büßte seine ‚zu große Freimütigkeit' mit dem Tode,[53] und überlebende Mitglieder der Delegationen wurden entweder dem *vicarius Africae* Crescens zur Hinrichtung überstellt[54] oder von den Soldaten des *comes* in wütenden Sprechchören an die Verweigerung ihrer *annona* erinnert und beinahe gelyncht.[55] Doch jetzt greift die Göttin der

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[47] 28.6.19: *luctuosis provinciae cineribus visis*. Die Angriffe der libyschen Stämme sind nur eine Vorschau auf die Revolte des Firmus, bei der Caesarea, *incendiis exusta*, in einen Haufen Asche verwandelt wird (29.5.18).

[48] 28.6.20: *qua gratia flagitiorum arbitra conscientia cum Romano deinde Palladius concordebat reversusque ad comitatum arte mendaciorum impia Valentinianum fefellerat Tripolitanos frustra queri commemorans*.

[49] 28.6.17: *numerorum principiis per quosdam secretorum mandaverat conscios, ut ei* (sc. *Palladio*) *tamquam potenti et palatii summatibus proximo stipendii, quod pertulerat, praestarent maximam partem*. Cf. 18: Palladius als *confestim…ditatus*. Wer der ‚chief supporter of Romanus' war—nach Warmington, ‚The Career of Romanus', 59 Palladius, nach Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 304 Remigius—ist nicht festzustellen.

[50] Günther, ‚Leptis-Magna-Affäre', 449.

[51] Beachte den Ablativus absolutus *eo usque iniquitate grassante* (28.6.21).

[52] 28.6.25: *externis domesticisque cladibus vexata conticuit Tripolis*. Zur *acerbitas* Valentinians 28.6.22 und 29.3.2.

[53] 28.6.22–23: *quod in relatione eius verba quaedam, ut visum est, immodica legebantur. ac Ruricius quidem apud Sitifim caesus*. Die Berichte des Ruricius an den Kaiser, eines *vir perfectissimus*, über Romanus, einen *vir spectabilis*, blieben unbeachtet; siehe Mattingly, *Tripolitania*, 183.

[54] Zu Jovinus als *auctor* und seinen drei ‚Komplizen' Caelestinus, Concordius und Lucius, vermutlich Kurialen, die ihn unterstützten, siehe 28.6.22.

[55] 28.6.23: *Flaccianus…acclamationibus iratorum militum impetuque cum conviciis paene confossus est*.

Gerechtigkeit, von den Verwünschungen der Getöteten auf den Plan gerufen, ein: *vigilavit Iustitiae oculus sempiternus ultimaeque legatorum et praesidis dirae.*[56]

## IV. *Die Rache der Iustitia*

Die Gerechtigkeit, die als *arbiter et vindex perpetuus rerum*, ewiger Zeuge und Richter, über alle Dinge wacht,[57] verlangt eine Bestrafung der Täter—zunächst des Romanus und seiner Freunde in der Diözese Africa: Als der ältere Theodosius im Sommer 373 die politische Bühne der Provinz betrat, um die Usurpation des Maurenfürsten Firmus niederzuwerfen, eskalierte der in den Charakteren angelegte Konflikt zwischen dem *comes Africae* und dem *magister militum.*[58] Im Kampf gegen Firmus kontrastiert Ammian Theodosius' Sieghaftigkeit mit dem Verlust der Feldzeichen durch Romanus. Der *ductor exercituum ille magnificus* erhielt sie zusammen mit der goldenen Krone des getöteten *flamen* der Provinz nach seinem Sieg über die Rebellen zurück.[59] Theodosius hielt Romanus, dessen Garnisonen seit zehn Jahren in den Städten des Cheliftales stationiert waren und sich von dem Land ernährten, für mitschuldig am Ausbruch der Revolte,[60] sei es durch eine zu hohe Steuerschätzung oder durch Romanus' Anklage des Firmus wegen Mordes.[61] Romanus wurde zur Überwachung der Feldwachen und Grenzposten abkommandiert und, als er sich in die Mauretania Caesariensis absetzen wollte, mit seinem gesamten Stab und seinem *vicarius* Vincentius als

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[56] 28.6.25 spielt mit der Ambiguität von *dirae* als todbringende Fluchformeln und ihrer Personifikation als Rachegöttinnen. Ammian zitiert eine alte Redewendung des Sophokles und Menander, siehe August Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig 1890; repr. Hildesheim 1988) 180.

[57] 29.2.20 (über die Magieprozesse in Antiochia).

[58] 28.6.26.

[59] 28.6.26 (Theodosius); 29.5.16 (*militaria signa et coronam sacerdotalem*). Der ‚Priesterkranz' gehörte vermutlich dem getöteten Priester Rusticianus (28.6.10).

[60] 29.5.5: *Romanum…parum super his, quae verebatur, increpitum.*

[61] 29.5.2: *e quibus Zammac comiti nomine Romano acceptus latenter a fratre Firmo peremptus discordias excitavit et bella.* Dagegen der *advocatus fisci* Zosimos (4.16.1): Οὐαλεντινιανὸς …βαρύτατος ἦν ταῖς ἀπαιτήσεσι τῶν εἰσφορῶν σφοδρότερον ἐπικείμενος καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸ σύνηθες ταύτας εἰσπράττων; 4.16.3: τὴν Ῥωμανοῦ πλεονεξίαν; *Cod. Theod.* 11.1.10 (*annona*); *CIL* 8.7975 (neue kaiserliche Kornspeicher in Rusiccade); übertrieben 27.9.1–2 und 27.6.1 (Anm. 39).

Teilhaber seiner Ungesetzlichkeit und Räubereien (*incivilitatis…particeps et furtorum*) verhaftet.[62]

Von da an wird der Verlauf der historischen Handlung immer wieder von einer dramatischen Serie emotionaler Todesszenen aus dem Freundeskreis des Romanus unterbrochen. Zwei seiner Anhänger erlitten schwere Strafen: Theodosius ließ Castor und Martinianus, *rapinarum flagitiorumque Romani participes*, foltern und lebendigen Leibes in Sitifis verbrennen.[63] Als ersten von Romanus' Kontaktmännern bei Hofe ereilte Remigius sein Schicksal. Er war schon 371 wegen Begünstigung als *magister officiorum* von Leo, dem Notar und Gehilfen des Maximinus, abgelöst worden.[64] In der trügerischen Sicherheit von dessen Heimatgut bei Mainz[65] inszeniert Ammian nur zwei Jahre später theatralisch wirkungsvoll Remigius' Tod als eine Demonstration der ewigen Macht der Göttin der Gerechtigkeit, die die ruhelos umherirrenden Totengeister der Gesandten von Tripolis nicht vergaß: Die Iustitia ‚kommt zuweilen spät, ist aber ein gewissenhafter Richter (*scrupulosus quaesitor*) gerechter und unrechter Taten'.[66] Remigius erhängte sich, während der Prätorianerpräfekt Maximinus bei seinen Ermittlungen dessen ehemaligen *domesticus* Caesarius einem Verhör auf der Folter unterzog.[67] Er hatte die Berichterstattung bei Hofe manipuliert, indem er dem Kaiser Romanus' überzogene *relationes* oder Anklagen vortrug und Gegendarstellungen unterdrückte.[68] Die Furcht vor falschen Anklagen (*formido…calum-*

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[62] 29.5.7: *Sitifim properans Romanum cum domesticis custodiendum protectoribus committi mandavit.* Siehe *PLRE* I, Vincentius 4.

[63] 29.5.50.

[64] 28.6.30; 30.2.10: *Remigius, quem populanti provincias rettulimus comiti favisse Romano, postquam Leo in eius locum magister esse coepit officiorum, a muneribus rei publicae iam quiescens*; Manfred Clauss, *Der magister officiorum in der Spätantike (4.-6. Jahrhundert)*, Vestigia 32 (München 1980) 165–166 (Leo), 186–187 (Remigius).

[65] 30.2.10–11: *Remigius…negotiis se ruralibus dedit prope Mogontiacum in genitalibus locis. quem sibi morantem securius.*

[66] 30.2.9: *legatorum Tripoleos manes inultos etiam tum et errantes sempiternus vindicavit Iustitiae vigor, aliquotiens serus, sed scrupulosus quaesitor gestorum recte vel secus eo modo.*

[67] 30.2.12: *conscientia malorum urgente vel rationem formidine superante calumniarum innodato gutture laquei nexibus interiit.* 30.2.11: *quae Remigius egerit vel quantum acceperit, ut Romani iuvaret actos infandos, per quaestionem cruentam interrogabat* (*Maximinus Caesarium*). Dabei läßt Ammian sein Publikum bewußt im Unklaren, ob Caesarius, *antehac…domesticus, postea notarius principis* (30.2.11), als Notar gefoltert wurde—so die communis opinio nach Teitler, *Notarii and exceptores*, 120 s.v. Caesarius 1—oder nach dem gewünschten Ergebnis der Befragung auffallend schnell befördert wurde. Zu vergleichbaren Formulierungen (28.1.12, 28.2.5) siehe Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 302–303, Anm. 40.

[68] 29.5.2: *navabatur opera diligens in palatio Romani quidem relationes multa et aspera congerentes in Firmum libenter suscipi recitarique principi in earum favorem concinentibus multis; ea vero, quae*

*niarum*) läßt auf ein Majestätsverbrechen schließen.[69] Remigius' Schwager Romanus stand nicht unmittelbar im Visier des Maximinus—oder er konnte sich mit ihm und Leo arrangieren.

Ein *crimen laesae maiestatis* war auch die Ursache des zweiten Machtwechsels am Hofe Valentinians. Palladius' Schicksal spiegelt das des Remigius wider. Er kam der Kapitalstrafe durch Erhängen zuvor, während seine Bewacher in der Kirche zu Weihnachten 374 oder zu Ostern 375 ein christliches Fest der Freude feierten.[70] Die Wahrheit kam—nach der überzeugenden neuen Chronologie von Coşkun schon im Herbst 373 und nicht erst 376—an den Tag, als Theodosius bei der Untersuchung des beweglichen Vermögens im Archiv des *comes* Romanus einen kompromittierenden Brief des Meterius entdeckte, in dem Palladius gestand, den Kaiser belogen zu haben.[71] Ammian zitiert diese Passage aus dem Brief, der im Frühjahr 374 an den Kaiserhof gesandt wurde und die Festnahme ins Rollen brachte.

Andere wurden mit der politischen Krise 375/6 unter Gratian in Verbindung gebracht, die nach dem Tod seines Vaters einsetzte. Die Eliminierung des einflußreichen Prätorianerpräfekten Maximinus und seiner Anhänger unmittelbar nach Theodosius' Ermordung—er wurde nach dem 16. April 376 abgesetzt und auf die Anklage einer Senatsgesandtschaft hingerichtet—markierte das Ende des langen Machtkampfes. Symmachus, der mit dem General Theodosius befreundet war, pries Gratian für die personelle Säuberung und charakterisierte die Opfer im traditionellen Jargon des Senats als Kriminelle und Tyrannen.[72] Ammian verzichtete darauf, ihn zu imitieren. Er selbst begnügte sich mit einer Prophezeiung, die programmatisch verkündete, Maximi-

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*contra Firmus…docebat…accepta diutius occultari Remigio tunc officiorum magistro, affine amicoque Romani.*

[69] Nicht die Folter des *palatinus* Caesarius, wie Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 302, Anm. 40 und 304 annimmt. Privilegien für Höhergestellte, z.B. Senatoren, sind erst wieder 376 unter Gratian bezeugt (*Cod. Theod.* 9.1.13).

[70] Nach 28.6.27 im Bewußtsein seiner Untaten: *cogitans, quas criminum coxerit moles, in statione…innodato gutture laquei nexibus interiit.* Von seinem Diensteid entbunden, hatte er sich ins Privatleben zurückgezogen.

[71] 28.6.26: „*salutat te Palladius proiecticius, qui non aliam ob causam dicit se esse proiectum, nisi quod in causa Tripolitanorum apud aures sacras mentitus est.*" 28.6.27 (Konfiszierung von Meterius' Brief an Romanus): *his litteris ad comitatum missis et lectis Valentiniani iussu Meterius raptus.* Zur Chronologie Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 301–302 im Gegensatz zu Seyfarth und anderen.

[72] *Cod. Theod.* 9.19.4 vom 16.4. 376 (an Maximinus); Symm. *Or.* 4.10–12; *Ep.* 10.2.3 (von 376): *Ferox ille Maximinus ob res secundas, incubator iudiciorum, difficilis decidendis simultatibus, promptus ineundis, poena capitali exitia cunctorum lacrimasque expiavit.* Siehe Matthews,

nus werde zu höchster Macht emporsteigen, jedoch durch das Schwert des Henkers sterben.[73] Eine knappe Referenz auf die Wachsamkeit der Rachegöttinnen (*dirae*) der Erschlagenen konstatierte, daß dem verhaßten Präfekten und Fl. Simplicius, dem Vikar von Rom, gleichfalls der Kopf abgeschlagen wurde, während der Gallier Doryphorianus, dessen Nachfolger, auf der Folter starb.[74] Der Historiker versäumte es nicht, den Hauptverantwortlichen für Theodosius' Ermordung als Erzbösewicht in den *Res Gestae* darzustellen, der auf der Suche nach unentdeckten Geheimnissen in allen Winkeln wie eine furchtbare Seuche umging. Als Motiv unterstellte er ihm—wie im Fall des Theodosius—das Verlangen, mit allen Mitteln Schaden zuzufügen.[75]

Die Rache der Iustitia bei Ammian traf die hochgestellten Feinde des älteren Theodosius, die an seinem Sturz beteiligt waren und zur gleichen Zeit oder wenig später starben als er. Es handelte sich um denselben Personenkreis, der bei Hieronymus anonym blieb, weil es die zeitliche Distanz noch nicht gestattete oder weil er ihre Namen definitiv nicht kannte. Ammian entlarvte die Hauptverantwortlichen, indem er Namen und Details aus ihrem Leben preisgab, Hintergründe und Kontakte aufrollte, und vor allem auf die Art ihrer Bestrafung einging. Theodosius der Jüngere hatte—wie Errington überzeugend gezeigt hat—darauf verzichten müssen, weil sie schon tot waren, bevor er 379 Kaiser wurde.[76] Ammians Allegorie der Iustitia ist ein Reflex auf die ausgleichende göttliche Gerechtigkeit ihres frühen Todes in Hieronymus' *Chronik* und in der Glosse.

Der Tod Kaiser Valentinians und von Romanus' Verbündeten am Kaiserhof scheint eine Wende zum Besseren einzuleiten.[77] Erst jetzt, als unter Gratian im Mai 376 ein Revisionsverfahren eingeleitet wurde, enthüllt Ammian, daß ein Teil des grausamen Strafgerichts in Africa gar nicht vollzogen worden war: Einer der Gesandten war in Rom eines natürlichen Todes gestorben, und die Kurialen aus Lepcis, denen

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*Western Aristocracies*, 65–67; ‚Symmachus and the *magister militum* Theodosius', passim; Errington, ‚The Accession of Theodosius I', 447.

[73] 28.1.7: *ad usque sublimia regimenta…sed periturum ferro poenali.*

[74] 28.1.57. Vergl. *PLRE* I, Doryphorianus. Zu den harten Fakten siehe Coşkun, ‚Die Ämterlaufbahn des Pannoniers Maximinus', 14 Anm. 23–24.

[75] 30.2.11: *praefectus praetorio Maximinus* (sc. *Remigium*) *reversum ad otium spernens, ut solebat dirae luis ritu grassari per omnia, laedere modis, quibus poterat, affectabat.* Zu seiner *nocendi ars* siehe auch Symm. *Or.* 4.10.

[76] Errington, ‚The Accession of Theodosius I', 446.

[77] 28.6.28: *hoc fortunae secundioris indicio plene comperto deletoque tristium concitore turbarum* (i.e. *Palladius*).

die Zungen abgeschnitten werden sollten, sagten vor dem Prokonsul und dem Vikar von Africa, Decimius Hesperius und Nicomachus Flavianus, aus.[78] Ammians Lob über ihr ausgewogenes Urteil, verbunden mit einem Höchstmaß an Gerechtigkeit und Autorität (*aequitas auctoritate mixta iustissima*), fand in den Inschriften der Gemeinde von Lepcis ein Echo: Beide wurden als Patrone der Stadt mit Statuen öffentlich geehrt, der Vikar von dem *fidelis et innocens ordo*, der Prokonsul sogar ausdrücklich für seine *iustitia* gegenüber den Delegationen der Tripolitaner.[79]

## V. *Nachspiel*

Bis dahin waren die politischen Konflikte zwischen Römern und Provinzialen persönlich und nicht global, stets siegten am Ende die Gerechtigkeit, Ordnung und Vergeltung. Die über Rom wachende Iustitia war ihre Festung gegen das Chaos, und angesichts der blutigen Niederlage von Adrianopel brauchten sie diese Gewißheit dringend. Umso mehr mußte es das Weltbild der Leser erschüttern, als auf das scheinbare Ende des Dramas (*memorandus finis*) eine erneute Peripetie und, ausgelöst von Furcht und Mitleid, der heilsame Schock einer Katharsis folgte.[80] Obwohl der Betrug durch das Geständnis von Romanus' Vertrautem Caecilius aufgedeckt und durch eine wahrheitsgemäße *relatio* an den Kaiser offiziell bestätigt wurde, verlief das Revisionsverfahren

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[78] 28.6.28: *exsiluerunt Erechthius et Aristomenes e latebris*; 28.6.24 (Flaccianus). Nach Altay Coşkun, ‚Die Karriere des Virius Nicomachus Flavianus. Mit Exkursen zu den praefecti praetorio Italiae, Africae et Illyrici 388–395', *Athenaeum* 92 (2004) 467–491, 469 fiel dessen Vikariat bereits ins Frühjahr 376; zu ihm als Quelle Ammians siehe Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine* II, 354, 359–360.

[79] 28.6.28. *IRT* 475 (Flavianus) und *IRT* 526 (Hesperius): *iustitiae quam causae Tripolitanae del(e)gatae…exhibuit*. Siehe Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 386–387; Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine* II, 358–360; Warmington, ‚The Career of Romanus', 64; Brandt, *Moralische Werte*, 299.

[80] 28.6.25–30. Ammian hat um der Einheit der Handlung willen, die sich aus dramatischen Einzelepisoden (*fabulae*) zusammensetzt, das Ende vorweggenommen. Schon die antiken Dramentheorie kennt den Plot als ein Entwicklung und inneren Zusammenhang des Dramas bestimmendes Prinzip; vergl. Klaus Peter Müller, ‚Dramentheorie', in *Metzlers Lexikon der Literatur- und Kulturtheorie* (Stuttgart, 3. Aufl. 2004) 122, und Heinz Antor, ‚Plot', ibidem 529. Zur tragischen Katharsis bei Aristoteles und zum weiten Spektrum des Begriffs siehe zuletzt die Schlußdiskussion der Tagung *Katharsiskonzeptionen* (Berlin, 17.-19.6.2005) von Bernd Seidensticker und Martin Vöhler (eds.), *Katharsis vor Aristoteles. Zum kulturellen Hintergrund des Tragödiensatzes* (Berlin 2007, im Druck).

auch diesmal im Sande.[81] Die provinziale Lepcis-Magna-Affäre nahm universalhistorische Dimensionen an, als Ammian (28.6.29) erklärte: *Et ne quid coturni terribilis fabulae relinquerent intemptatum, hoc quoque post depositum accessit aulaeum*—‚damit die dramatischen Episoden (*fabulae*) nichts vom Stil einer furchterregenden Tragödie (*coturnus terribilis*) vermissen ließen, kam, nachdem der Vorhang bereits gefallen war, noch ein Nachspiel hinzu.'[82]

In dem Nachspiel feierte Romanus ein überraschendes Comeback. Kein Wort von einer Absetzung des *comes Africae* 373 nach seiner Verhaftung in der Firmusaffäre! Seine Kollaboration mit Palladius blieb ebenso ungeahndet wie diejenige mit Remigius. Coşkun hat mit Recht einen Freispruch vermutet, da Theodosius weder gegen ihn noch dessen Stellvertreter Vincentius ausreichend belastendes Beweismaterial fand.[83] Dazu würde gut passen, daß Vincentius wenig später in den Kämpfen mit Firmus auf der Seite des Theodosius auftauchte.[84] Und Romanus' Ablösung als *comes Africae* durch seinen Nachfolger Flavius Victorianus ist nicht, wie bisher angenommen, 373, sondern erst nach

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[81] 28.6.28: *haec acta secuta est relatio gestorum pandens plenissimam fidem, ad quam nihil responsum est.* Cf. *nefanda fraus.*

[82] *Terribilis* steht im Brennpunkt zwischen *coturni* und *fabulae* und ist mehrdeutig—eine bewußte Ambiguität Ammians? Die attraktivste Lösung aufgrund der lectio difficilior und Semantik ist, *fabulae* mit Marié (Budé), Rolfe (Loeb) und Caltabiano (Milan 1989) als Subjekt aufzufassen und *coturni terribilis* als Genetivus partitivus auf *ne quid* zu beziehen. Möglich wäre auch ein Nominativ *fabulae* mit dem Genetivus qualitatis *coturni terribilis*, oder Viansinos (Milano 2001–2002) umgekehrter Vorschlag ‚i coturni della terrificante tragedia'. Nach TLL VI.1 (1912–1926, 33 s.v. *fabula* versteht er *coturni* als Nominativ Plural mit *terribilis fabulae* als Genetivattribut im Singular; aber *fabula* wird hier anstelle von *coturnus* unzutreffend mit ‚Tragödie' wiedergegeben; vergl. TLL IV (1906–1909) 1088 s.v. *cothurnus* ad loc. Die Übersetzungen von Seyfarth und Hamilton sind ungenau. Ähnliche Vergleiche mit der Tragödie, stets mit Adjektivattribut, in 20.1.2 über Lupicinus (*de tragico…coturno strepentem*), 27.11.2 über Probus (*de coturno …tragico—socco*) und 28.4.7 über Darlehensnehmer (*soccos—coturnatos*). Das Herablassen des Vorhangs, das nur bei Ammian (28.6.29, 16.6.3) bezeugt ist, enthüllt die Bühne und weist wie in Iuv. 6.67f. daraufhin, daß der Vorhang weggeräumt und das Theater geschlossen wird. Siehe P. de Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus* XVI (Groningen 1972) 66 und Lachmann, TLL V.1 (1909–1934) 576 s.v. *depono*. Dagegen vermuten W. Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Römische Geschichte* (Darmstadt 1983–1986) Bd. 1, 293, Anm. 61, Marie-Anne Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome V, Livres XXVI–XXVIII* (Paris 1984) 301, Anm. 467 und TLL II (1900–1906) 1461 s.v. *aulaeum* im Fallen statt im Hochziehen des Vorhangs (z.B. Cic. *Cael.* 65, Ov. *Met.* 3.111) nach der Vorstellung eine Änderung der Theaterpraxis in der Spätantike.

[83] Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 301.

[84] 29.5.19: *provinciae rectores tribunusque Vincentius e latibulis…egressi tandem intrepidi ad ducem ocius pervenerunt.* Zur Identifikation siehe schon Warmington, ‚The Career of Romanus', 60.

dem Revisionsverfahren zwischen 375 und 378 inschriftlich bezeugt.[85] Dagegen sah sich Ammian gezwungen, Theodosius' Vorgehen gegen Romanus und dessen Freunde gleich zweimal zu rechtfertigen: durch Briefe, in denen Firmus Romanus als die personifizierte Ungerechtigkeit (*iniquitas*) bezeichnete, und durch die Weisungen des Kaisers (*Valentiniani iussu*).[86] Glaubte Ammian wirklich an die ewige Macht der Iustitia? Oder lag vielmehr die Tragik darin, daß sie gerade in der Romanusaffäre nicht wirksam war?

Das Nachspiel entlarvt die Tragik der *fabulae*. Die Theaterillusion eines gerechten Revisionsverfahrens wird zugunsten der historischen Realität aufgelöst. Die Anagnorisis spielt sich gleichsam als Metadrama mit Verspätung an einem anderen Schauplatz, in Gallien und Italien, ab, nachdem der Vorhang bereits abmontiert und die ‚offizielle' Aufführung beendet ist. Ammian läßt sein Publikum einen Blick hinter die Kulissen der politischen Bühne werfen, die das Herablassen des Vorhangs enthüllt hat. Dort erscheinen Romanus, der straflos davonkommt, und eine Göttin der Gerechtigkeit, die nicht—wie J. Amat meint—das ganze Imperium Romanum durchwaltet, sondern angesichts der Schlechtigkeit des Romanus und der undurchdringlichen Netzwerke seiner Hintermänner kapituliert und so die wiederholten Auftritte der vielzitierten Iustitia Lügen straft.

Im Sommer 376 reiste Romanus, von Caecilius begleitet, an den Kaiserhof nach Trier und im Spätherbst zum Verhör nach Mailand, um die Untersuchungsrichter wegen Parteinahme zugunsten der Provinzen zu verklagen.[87] Er logierte bei Merobaudes, der als *magister peditum* der Vorgesetzte des *comes Africae* war. Sein einflußreicher Gastgeber war auch derjenige, der mit dem Prätorianerpräfekten Fl. Claudius Antonius, einem angeheirateten Verwandten und Anhänger des Theodosius, 377 den Vorsitz des Prozesses in Mailand führte:[88] Ihm war es zu verdanken, daß Romanus' Petition, neue Zeugen aus Tripolita-

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[85] *CIL* 8.10937 = 20566; *IRT* 570 = *AE* 1957, 236. Siehe *PLRE* I, Victorianus 2; Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine* II, 360; Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 300, Anm. 31 (mit dem Irrtum oder der Korrektur 376!). Der von *PLRE* I, Fasti, 1117 für 373 postulierte Anonymus 66 ist überflüssig.

[86] 29.5.8 (Aussage des Firmus); 28.6.27 (Verhaftungen).

[87] 28.6.29. Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 305–306 vermutet eine Trennung von *comitatus* und Ort des Verhörs; vergl. dagegen Klaus M. Girardet, ‚Die Erhebung Kaiser Valentinians II. Politische Umstände und Folgen (375/76)', *Chiron* 34 (2004) 109–144, bes. 142–144.

[88] Zu Flavius Merobaudes, *magister peditum* seit 375 (30.5.13), in Mailand siehe Saylor Rodgers, ‚Merobaudes and Maximus in Gaul', 89–90; zum Antritt der *praefectura Italiae*

nien vorzuladen, stattgegeben wurde und daß er bei der Einstellung des Verfahrens im Jahre 378 vom Vorwurf der Verleumdung freigesprochen wurde. Die Zeugen wurden freigelassen und kehrten nach Africa zurück.[89] Fl. Vivius Benedictus, der auf Inschriften von Lepcis und Sabratha als *vindex libertatis* und *vir totius…iustitiae* geehrt wurde, dürfte seine Landsleute in dem Appellationsverfahren verteidigt haben und erhielt noch im selben Jahr den Posten eines *praeses* von Tripolitanien.[90]

Der *favor* des Merobaudes, den Coşkun und Saylor Rodgers bestreiten, kam nicht in dem offensichtlich fairen Prozeß, sondern lediglich im Strafmaß zum Tragen.[91] Romanus wurde nicht, wie es das Edikt *de delatoribus* von 365 vorsah, wegen *calumnia* mit dem Tode bestraft und mußte noch nicht einmal die Prozeßkosten tragen.[92] Dahinter kann nur ein politisches Motiv stehen: Beide dürften an der Intrige, die im Winter 375/6 zum Sturz des älteren Theodosius führte, beteiligt gewesen sein. Zwar berichtet keine Quelle über Kontakte zwischen dem *comes Africae* und dem Heermeister Merobaudes vor 376,[93] aber er und Theodosius der Ältere, der die Kornzufuhr nach Rom sperren konnte, waren zur Zeit von Valentinians Tod die mächtigsten Männer des Kaiserreiches. Nach dem Prinzip *cui bono* liegt es auf der Hand, daß die Kaisermacher, Merobaudes und seine pannonischen Freunde um Equitius, vom Tod des Theodosius profitierten, seit sie mit der Proklamation des vierjährigen Valentinian II. am 22. November 375 in Aquincum nach der höchsten Macht im Staat gegriffen hatten.[94] Sie waren es

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des Antonius die These von Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 306, vergl. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 94 zu seiner Verwandtschaft.

[89] 28.6.30.

[90] Zu dem *praeses* 378, Fl. Vivius Benedictus, Patron von Lepcis und Sabratha, siehe *IRT* 103 (*vir totius integritatis, moderationis, iustitiae, provisionis, fidei, benignitatis, fortitudinis ac beneficentiae*) und *IRT* 571 (*innocentium fautor, vindex libertatis*). Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine* II, 360–361 und Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 306 überzeugend gegen Warmington, ‚The Career of Romanus', 64.

[91] 28.6.29: *isque* (sc. *Romanus*) *Merobaudis favore susceptus*. Unzutreffend Saylor Rodgers, ‚Merobaudes and Maximus in Gaul', 86 und Coşkun, vergl. die Widersprüche zwischen ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 306–307 und 308.

[92] *Cod. Theod.* 10.10.10. Zu einer möglichen Verschärfung 370 siehe Demandt, ‚Tripolitanische Wirren', 352–353, zur Kostenerstattung Max Kaser, *Das römische Zivilprozeßrecht*, 2. erw. und neubearb. Auflage von Karl Hackl, HdAW 3.4 (München 1996) 631–632.

[93] Errington, ‚The Accession of Theodosius I', 445; Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 307, Anm. 57.

[94] 30.10.2–5; *Chron. Min.* 1.242; Zos. 4.19.1. Siehe Errington, ‚The Accession of Theodosius I', 440–441; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 64–65, vereinfacht bei Williams,

auch, deren *invidia* der ältere Theodosius erregte und die das Leben des jüngeren Theodosius bedrohten, wie die christlichen Autoren mutmaßten.[95]

Auch andere Indizien sprechen dafür, daß Romanus mit seinen guten Beziehungen zu zwei Vikaren von Africa, Dracontius und Crescens, und in Mauretania Caesariensis, sowie Freunden am Kaiserhof zu den *ceteri* gehörte, aus denen sich die Clique (*factio*) der Feinde des Theodosius um den Prätorianerpräfekten Fl. Maximinus konstituierte.[96] Umgekehrt verfügte Simplicius, Maximinus' juristischer Berater aus Emona, über direkte Kontakte nach Africa und war kurz vor Theodosius' Tod Statthalter von Numidia.[97] Ammian geht noch weiter: Wie Catilina soll ein Romanus schon in einer *schola scutariorum* mit einem Tribunen namens Vincentius einen Staatsstreich geplant haben, ebenfalls ohne seine Strafe, das Exil, je anzutreten.[98] Selbst wenn die homonymen Männer nicht mit unserem Romanus und seinem *vicarius* identisch sind, wurden dadurch Zweifel an ihren politischen Zielen und mutmaßlichen Gönnern geweckt. Die Pannonier Equitius und Valentinian und der Franke Merobaudes stiegen wie sie über eine derartige *schola* zum Kaiser oder zu Kaisermachern auf.[99] Zu diesen alten Verbindungen paßt der letzte Akt der Tragödie Ammians: Während Romanus von dem einflußreichen *magister militum* Merobaudes beschützt und freigesprochen wurde, wurde der siegreiche Feldherr Theodosius, wir wissen nicht unter welchem Vorwand, Anfang 376 in Carthago enthauptet.

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Friell, *Theodosius*, 23–24; und jetzt Girardet, ‚Die Erhebung Kaiser Valentinians II', 127–144 über Themistios' Mission am Hofe Gratians.

[95] Oros. *hist.* 7.33.7: *instimulante et obrepente invidia*; Ambr. *Obit. Theod.* 53: *insidiabantur eius saluti, qui patrem eius triumphatorem occiderant.*

[96] Zur Gruppe um Romanus gehörten auch Vincentius, sein Stellvertreter, sein *consiliarius* Caecilianus (28.6.21, 28–29), Castor, Martinianus (29.5.50), Meterius, ein Klient (28.6.26–27), *domestici* (28.6.21, 29.5.8), Offiziere und *quidam secretorum conscii* (28.6.17). Siehe Demandt, ‚Tripolitanische Wirren', 355–358.

[97] *ILS* 5535 = *CIL* 8.8324; vergl. *PLRE* I, Simplicius 7.

[98] 22.11.2: *Romanus quin etiam et Vincentius Scutariorum scholae primae secundaeque tribuni agitasse convicti quaedam suis viribus altiora acti sunt in exsilium.* Siehe Warmingtons Identifikation, ‚The Career of Romanus', 62–63. Der Autor gibt keinen anderslautenden Hinweis. David Woods, ‚Ammianus and some *Tribuni Scholarum Palatinarum* c. AD 353–364', *CQ* 47 (1997) 269–291, 276–277, identifiziert ihn zusätzlich mit einem Romanus bei Thdt. *HE* 3.12–13, glaubt aber an den Vollzug der Strafe.

[99] *Tribuni scholae Scutariorum primae*: Romanus c. A.D. 359–362 und Equitius 363–364; *secundae*: Vincentius 360–362 und Valentinian 363–364; *armaturarum*: Merobaudes 362–364. Siehe Woods, ‚Ammianus and some *Tribuni*', 288–289, Tabelle 291 nach der überzeugenden Hypothese Warmingtons, ‚The Career of Romanus', 63; anders Coşkun, ‚Der *Comes* Romanus', 299–300, Anm. 29.

## VI. *Conclusio: Die politische Botschaft des Kaisers*

Ziehen wir Bilanz: Was bleibt, ist wie in jeder antiken Tragödie ein ungelöster Konflikt mit der sittlichen Weltordnung in Allegorie der Iustitia. Ungeachtet der Tatsache, daß Indizien für Strafbestände wie Verleumdung (*calumnia*), Falschaussage (*falsum*), Veruntreuung öffentlicher Gelder (*peculatus*) und Korruption (*repetundae*) in den voreingenommenen Bericht Ammians eingestreut waren,[100] folgt weder eine Rehabilitation der Lepcitaner noch eine Bestrafung des Romanus. Beseitigt wurde statt dessen—so lautet die unausgesprochene, tragische Konsequenz—sein Gegenspieler Theodosius, der die Mißstände aufdeckte und dem die falschen Anschuldigungen seiner Feinde zum Verhängnis wurden. Ammian, der ein Drama mit dem älteren Theodosius als tragischem Helden inszenierte, war taktvoll genug, nicht dessen Tod, sondern dessen Unterliegen vor dem Ausweglosen (*fatum*) wiederzugeben. Der Vergleich mit zwei Generälen Neros und Trajans enthüllt hinter dem offensichtlichen Glanz der Panegyrik für Theodosius die Schattenseiten seiner überragenden militärischen Fähigkeiten (29.5.4): ‚Seine Leistungen überstrahlten zu jener Zeit alle übrigen, und so war er ein Feldherr, den man nur mit einem der alten Helden wie Domitius Corbulo und Lusius vergleichen kann'.[101] Das gebildete Publikum verstand die Anspielung auf das spätere Schicksal des *magister equitum*. Sein Tod erscheint, in Analogie zu dem seiner Vorgänger, als eine Episode im Machtkampf am Kaiserhof Gratians nach dem Tode Valentinians.

Doch das tertium comparationis gibt nicht nur Aufschluß über den äußeren Anlaß, wie Warmington gezeigt hat.[102] Es wirft auch Licht auf mögliche Motive für Theodosius' rasche Exekution und seine Haltung: Beide, Domitius Corbulo und der Reiterführer Lusius Quietus, gerieten in Verdacht, an einer Verschwörung beteiligt gewesen zu sein, und fielen wie Theodosius diesem Verdacht zum Opfer. Nero zitierte Domitius Corbulo auf seiner Griechenlandtour zu sich; der General erhielt den Befehl zu sterben und gehorchte.[103] Die versteckten Anspielungen deu-

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[100] Freundlicher Hinweis von Detlef Liebs (Freiburg i. Br.).

[101] Unzutreffend als reines Herrscherlob interpretiert von Johannes Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike* (Stuttgart 1939; repr. 1964) 220, Anm. 122, auch keine ‚unfreiwillig panegyrische Verklärung', so Alexander Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild im Werk Ammians* (Bonn 1965) 92.

[102] Warmington, ‚The Career of Romanus', 64, Anm. 70.

[103] D.C. 63.17.2 und 5–6. Siehe Ronald Syme, *Tacitus*, 2 Bde. (Oxford 1958; repr. 1979) Bd. 2, 560.

ten darauf hin, daß der Held der letzten Bücher wie Corbulo von dem Kaiser fallen gelassen wurde, für den er die größten Erfolge errungen hatte, und daß er gefaßt starb.[104] Sie lassen aber den Verdacht bestehen, daß auch er nicht ohne Makel war. Denn Lusius Quietus, einer der vier Armeekommandeure Trajans, die zu Beginn der Regierung Hadrians wegen eines mutmaßlichen Attentats auf den Herrscher getötet wurden, war als Führer einer maurischen Reiterala für seine Grausamkeit berüchtigt.[105] Die Brutalität des Siegers über die Mauren (*suppliciorum saevus repertor*) mußte von Ammian mit den Erfordernissen der Gerechtigkeit entschuldigt werden, und Theodosius' Loyalität wurde in Frage gestellt.[106] Waren dies die ‚übertriebenen Anschuldigungen' (*crimina*), denen Ammian entgegentreten wollte, als er über den Tod des älteren Theodosius lieber schwieg?[107]

Die Interaktion zwischen historischen Rahmenbedingungen und Darstellung führte zur Stiftung einer gemeinsamen Identität innerhalb der Oberschicht. Der entscheidende Impuls ging von dem Herrscher selbst aus. Kaiser Theodosius konnte nicht mehr gegen die Mörder seines Vaters vorgehen, da sie bereits tot waren, aber er rehabilitierte ihn fünf Jahre nach seinem Regierungsantritt. Reiterstandbilder aus vergoldeter Bronze wurden Theodosius dem Älteren seit 384 in verschiedenen Provinzen dediziert, vom Senat der Stadt Rom, von der Provinz Apulien und Calabrien, in Stobi, der Hauptstadt von Macedonia II, und in Antiochia.[108] In Ephesos wurde seine Statue als Ersatz für Maxi-

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[104] Die gefaßte Haltung bezeugt auch Oros. *hist.* 7.33.7: *post gloriosam saeculi vitam de vitae aeternitate securus, percussori iugulum ultro praebuit.* Theodosius' Sturz fiel möglicherweise noch unter Valentinian, sein Tod unter Gratian.

[105] D.C. 69.1.5, HA *H* 7.1–2 und 5.8. Siehe Anthony R. Birley, *Hadrian. The Restless Emperor* (London/New York 1997; repr. 1998) 87–88.

[106] 29.5.48 (aus dem Mund des Firmus); 29.5.23 (Urteil der *obtrectatores malivoli*), 29.5.43 (*ut aequitas poscebat*), siehe Drijvers, ‚Firmus', S. 154. Nach Symm. *Ep.* 10.2.2 von 395/6 erwies sich sein Regiment als bittere Medizin (*remedium* und *medicina*) für Africa mit dem Ziel, *feriata manu curationem iuvare praeceptis.*

[107] Siehe oben Anm. 15. Nicht notwendig Hochverrat, wie Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 107 und vorsichtiger Leppin, *Theodosius*, 32 vermuten.

[108] Spätestens 384/5, siehe Symm. *Rel.* 9.4: *Nam familiae vestrae et stirpis auctorem, Africanum quondam et Brittannicum (sic!) ducem statuis equestribus inter prisca nomina* ***consecravit.*** *ILS* 780 = *CIL* 9.333 (Canusium): *Inclyte venerandae memoriae viro Flavio Theodosio, genitori domini …principis Theodosi perpetui Aug(usti)…statuam equestrem subauratam Apuli et Calabri…posuerunt*; Rudolf Egger, ‚Der Erste Theodosius', *Byzantion* 5 (1929/30) 9–32, 28 = *RICM* 273, Tafel 61 (Stobi). Die Statue in Antiochia wurde bei der Revolte 387 beschädigt (Lib. *Or.* 20.10, 22.8). Grundlegend Domenico Vera, ‚Le statue del senato di Roma in onore di Flavio Teodosio e l'equilibrio dei poteri imperiali in età teodosiana', *Athenaeum* 57 (1979) 381–403.

mian in die Kaisergalerie der ersten Tetrarchen eingereiht und eine Stele mit einem Distichon als Zeugnis seiner militärischen Erfolge aufgestellt.[109] Dahinter standen ein großangelegter Propagandafeldzug des jüngeren Theodosius gegen seinen Rivalen Magnus Maximus und ein neues, alle Gesellschaftsschichten durchdringendes Programm bewußten Erinnerns an die großen Eroberungen Roms, in dem der *Africanus* und *Britannicus dux* nach dem Tode Gratians mit Musterkaisern wie Trajan, Mark Aurel und Diocletian (oder Constantin und Constantius II.), *inter prisca nomina*, auf eine Stufe gestellt wurde.[110] Nach seinem Sieg bei Aquileia und seinem triumphalen Einzug in Rom am 13. Juni 389 wurde der jüngere Theodosius im Senat von dem Redner Pacatus als lebender Gott gefeiert; sein Vater wurde in stadtrömischen Ehreninschriften postum vergöttlicht, obwohl der Titel für tote Kaiser, christliche eingeschlossen, reserviert war: Thermantia wurde als Frau des *divus Theodosius* und Stilicho, der Mann seiner Enkelin Serena, als *progener divi Theodosii* bezeichnet.[111]

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[109] *IvEph* 2.306 = *AE* 1961, 184; *AE* 1967, 479 in der Vorhalle des Hadrianstempels, darin ein Fries mit heroisiertem Kaiservater, *AE* 1966, 435 vor den Scholastikia-Thermen: Εὐδοκίης, μώλοιο, σαοφροσύνης, ἀρετάων / μάρτυς ἐγὼ στήλη Θευδοσίωι τελέθω.

[110] Vergl. die Reiterstatuen auf Münzen bei Philip V. Hill, *The Monuments of Ancient Rome as Coin Types* (London 1989) 66–71; Reiterstatuen Trajans nach dem Vorbild des *Equus Domitiani* bei Paul Zanker, ‚Das Trajansforum in Rom', *AA* 1970, 499–544, 508–510; zu Mark Aurel (verwechselt mit Constantin) Jaś Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph. The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100–450* (Oxford 1998) 76–79, Tafel 50 und zu Constantius II. Anm. 115. Them. *Or.* 16.202d–205, 19.229b–c und *Epit.* 48.1 propagieren eine fiktive Abstammung von Trajan. Zur Propaganda gegen Maximus und Eugenius in der offiziellen Publizistik siehe Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola*, 119–120, 224–226, in der Münzprägung Hans R. Baldus, ‚Theodosius der Große und die Revolte des Magnus Maximus—das Zeugnis der Münzen', *Chiron* 14 (1984) 175–192, bes. 186–192.

[111] Vera, ‚Le statue del senato di Roma', 382, 395–396, 402–403 bevorzugt das Jahr 384, siehe aber *ILS* 8950 (Via Sacra) von 389/91: *[Thermantia]e [sanctissimae] ac nobilissimae [memoriae femi]nae, coniugi divi [Theodosi, inlust]ris comitis utrius[que militiae mag. m]atri d.n. Theodosi…[augenti divinam] prosapiam.* In *ILS* 1277 = *CIL* 6.1730 (über Stilicho) von 398 sind Vater und Sohn genannt: *progenero divi Theodosii, comiti divi Theodosii Augusti.* Siehe Claud. *Laus Ser.* (*carm. min.* 30) 104–105, dazu Cameron, *Claudian*, 57 gegen Mommsen. Vermutlich auch das von Egger, ‚Der Erste Theodosius', 28 = *RICM* 273, Tafel 61 stark ergänzte Elogium aus Stobi (bei Drenovo): [Φλάβιον Θε]οδό[σιον τὸν θεῖον πατ]έρα. Zum umstrittenen Besuch des Kaisers *Chron. Min.* 1.245; in *Pan. Lat.* 2.4.5 verglichen mit Jupiter, Apollo und Artemis und Hercules: *deum dedit Hispania quem vidimus.* Siehe Nixon, Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors*, 453, Anm. 17; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 228–229; Williams, Friell, *Theodosius*, 65–67.

War Ammianus wirklich der ‚lonely historian', den Momigliano in ihm sah?[112] Die politische Botschaft ist eindeutig: Der Heermeister Theodosius, einer der *duces amplissimi*, die Rom immer wieder aus der Krise herausführten, wird zum Identifikationsmodell für die Nachwelt.[113] Die zeitgenössischen Literaten versuchten, das doppelte Programm von Leistung (*virtus*) und göttlicher Überlegenheit in ihren Werken umzusetzen, Pacatus in seinem *Panegyricus* auf den Kaiser, Claudian in seinen Gedichten und Ammian in der letzten Partie der *Res Gestae*.[114] Er berichtete von dem prunkvollen *Equus Traiani*, von dem Constantius II. so begeistert war, daß er das Denkmal für sich nachahmen lassen wollte.[115] Wie in der Ehreninschrift aus Canusium stilisierte er Theodosius zum *dux inclytus*, eine Qualität, wie sie seiner Ansicht nach sonst nur Scipio Aemilianus, dem Eroberer von Carthago und Numantia, oder Epaminondas, dem Sieger von Mantineia und Leitbild Kaiser Julians, zukam.[116] Die Parallelen sind augenfällig: Der eine erhielt den Ehrennamen *Africanus minor*, als er Africa 146 v.Chr. zur römischen Provinz machte, während der andere im Augenblick seines Sieges starb.

Die furchterregende Tragik (*terribilis coturnus*) der Geschichten (*fabulae*) eines immer wieder straffrei ausgehenden Romanus ließ Ammian hinter den Kulissen verschwinden. In der kollektiven Erinnerung künftiger Generationen sollte als *memorandus finis* nicht das kurze, ungerechte Nachspiel, sondern der sorgfältig konstruierte Kontrast zwischen dem Bild eines siegreichen Feldherrn und dem schrecklichen *exitus* seiner Kontrahenten haften bleiben: Statt Theodosius' Tod rückte Ammian seine Vision von der Clique der Feinde, bestehend aus Maximinus und den Hintermännern des Romanus, die ihn planten und dafür mit ihrem eigenen Leben büßten, kaleidoskopartig in den Fokus.[117]

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[112] Momigliano, ‚The Lonely Historian Ammianus', 150–152, bes. 151: ‚intellectually isolated'.

[113] 29.5.45 (siehe oben Anm. 6) und Leppin, *Theodosius*, 29–30.

[114] *Pan. Lat.* 2.5.1–4: Theodosius' *virtutes* und Eroberungen; 2.8.3: Theodosius der Ältere als *pater divinus*; Claud. *IV Cons. Hon.* 190, vergl. Birts Index 456 s.v. *divus*. Zu Vater und Sohn siehe Claud. *Bell. Gild.* 215–216: *duo divorum proceres… / Theodosii*; *Cons. Stil.* 2.421–422: *exultat uterque / Theodosius divique tui*. Auch Ammians Stil spiegelt nach Jacques Fontaine, ‚Le style d'Ammien Marcellin et l'esthétique théodosienne', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst und H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 27–37, 36 die ‚esthétique théodosienne' wider.

[115] 16.10.15.

[116] 28.3.1: *Theodosius vero, dux nominis incluti*; 23.5.20 (Scipio Aemilianus) und 25.3.8 (Epaminondas). Siehe Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 182. *Pan. Lat.* 2.5.4: Theodosius der Ältere als *Numantinus*.

[117] Zum Durchbruch der Strukturgeschichte hinter der hellenistischen *poikilia* siehe

Offenbar bestand sein Plan darin, dem Mythos des verehrten Kaisers Julian (Buch 14–25) in einem zweiten Anlauf den des rehabilitierten und lebendigen Generals Theodosius gegenüberzustellen—als strahlenden, unsterblichen Sieger und Gegenbild zu seinen Konkurrenten um die Kaisermacht.[118] Claudian hat die Apotheose poetisch ausgestaltet, indem er den Heermeister wie in *Scipios Traum* als himmlischen Boten von Jupiter durch die sieben Planetensphären an den Hof von Mailand sandte, um Honorius zu prophezeien, daß es das Schicksal des theodosianischen Hauses sei, das Haus von Gildo und Firmus in Africa auszulöschen.[119]

Nur im Konflikt zwischen Theodosius und Romanus hat die beschützend über allem schwebende Iustitia versagt. Ihre Partei ergreift der Schriftsteller, ein zutiefst skeptischer Ammian, wenn er das Geschichtsbild zurechtrückt, um durch seine Schwarzweißmalerei mit der Glorifizierung des älteren Theodosius einerseits, der Verurteilung des Romanus und seiner Hintermänner andererseits, die Namen, Aktivitäten und die Todesart der Feinde des Kaisers aufzudecken.[120] Der Historiker schlüpft in die Rolle der göttlichen Richterin Adrastia, die dem Schicksal als *ultrix facinorum impiorum bonorumque praemiatrix* gebietet, und erfüllt deren zweifache Aufgabe: ‚mit dem unauflöslichen Seil der Notwendigkeit den Hochmut der Sterblichen zu fesseln…die Bewegungen von Aufstieg und Niedergang zu lenken…und die Guten von tief unten zu einem glücklichen Leben emporzuheben' (14.11.25–26). Merobaudes' Tod ließ Ammian unerwähnt. Er wurde fünf Jahre, nachdem die *Res Gestae* endeten, von Magnus Maximus zum Selbstmord gezwungen und entging einer schnellen Bestrafung, weil er nicht direkt betei-

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Fontaine, ‚Le style d'Ammien Marcellin', 34–35; und Sabbah, ‚Ammianus Marcellinus', 81–82.

[118] Der Rebell Firmus springt bei seinem Anblick beeindruckt vom Pferd, *fulgore signorum et terribili vultu Theodosi praestrictus* (29.5.15). Siehe Paschoud, ‚Valentinien travesti', 72 zu vergleichbaren Herrscherporträts. Nicht unbedingt ‚adulation', so Momigliano, ‚The Lonely Historian', 150.

[119] Claud. *Bell. Gild.* 215–217: *Iam duo divorum proceres, maiorque minorque / Theodosii, pacem laturi gentibus ibant, / qui Iovis arcanos monitus mandataque ferrent*; 341: *hoc generi fatale tuo*. Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 6.16–29. Claudian unterdrückt Gildos pro-römische Rolle, vergl. Cameron, *Claudian*, 107–109.

[120] Sabbahs (*La méthode*, 449–453; ‚Ammianus Marcellinus', 82) ‚correctif à la schématisation' im Epilog kann mit Hinweis auf die Charakteristiken des älteren Theodosius und des Romanus auf die gesamte letzte Partie der *Res Gestae* ausgedehnt werden. Es muß deswegen unter Theodosius kein völlig verfälschtes Bild seines Vaters entstanden sein, wie Demandt, *Zeitkritik*, 150–151 annimmt.

ligt war oder weil der jüngere Theodosius ihm nicht gewachsen war.[121] Ammian hat somit ein Geschichtswerk verfaßt, das der Gerechtigkeit zuletzt doch noch zum Sieg verhalf und die Wahrheit gerade durch seinen oft kritisierten, polemischen Stil der Tragödie (*maiores…stilos*) publik machte.[122] Solche Autoren braucht Rom, lautet der Appell seines literarischen Testamentes am Ende der *Res Gestae*, wenn Geschichtsschreibung nach der Niederlage von Adrianopel eine Fortsetzung und eine Zukunft haben soll.[123]

[121] *Pan. Lat.* 2.28.4: *quorum alter* (*Merobaudes*) *post amplissimos magistratus et purpuras consulares…vita sese abdicare compulsus est.* Eher 383 (*cos. II*) als 388 (*cos. III*) nach der These von Barnes; siehe Nixon, Saylor-Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors*, 485–486, Anm. 93–94; vergl. aber Saylor-Rodgers, ‚Merobaudes and Maximus in Gaul', 94–97.

[122] 31.16.9: *opus veritatem professum numquam, ut arbitror, sciens silentio ausus corrumpere vel mendacio.* Vergl. das Proömium zu Buch 15: *Utcumque potui veritatem scrutari…residua quae secuturus aperiet textus pro virium captu limatius absolvemus.* Typisch für die antike Historiographie ist eine Spannung zwischen rhetorischer Gestaltung und Wahrheitsanspruch (z. B. Sabbah, *La méthode*, 19–21; Wittchow, *Exemplarisches Erzählen*, 22–24), unter anderem Ammians Hinweis in 16.1.3 auf Panegyrik als Vehikel der Zeitgeschichte (Matthews, ‚The Origin of Ammianus', 265–267 und Kelly's contribution in this volume), im Gegensatz zur Abwesenheit des Sublimen in unserer Gegenwart. Siehe Most, ‚After the Sublime', 120.

[123] 31.16.9: *scribant reliqua potiores aetate et doctrinis florentes. quos id, si libuerit, aggressuros procudere linguas ad maiores moneo stilos.* Der Ausdruck *grandes* (*maiores*) *coturni* (Hor. *Ars* 80 und Claud. *Theod.* 315) ist eine Metonymie für *maiores stilos*, den feierlichen tragischen oder heroischen Stil. Siehe auch 28.1.4: *cum coturnatius stilus procederet lacrimosus.* Referenzen auf den *tumor tragicus* (28.1.4), *coturnus terribilis* (28.6.29; vergl. TLL IV [1906–1909] 1088), Vergleiche mit der Tragödie (Anm. 82) und die zwiespältige *laudativa…materia* (16.1.3) in den Porträts seiner Helden scheinen über die Panegyrik (so Matthews und Kelly in Anm. 122) hinaus auf eine tragische Geschichtskonzeption Ammians hinzudeuten.

# CROSSING THE FRONTIERS: IMPERIAL POWER IN THE LAST BOOKS OF AMMIANUS[1]

Christopher Kelly

*Abstract*: This paper explores some of the differences in compositional strategies and the disposition of subject matter which mark off books 26–31 from the rest of Ammianus' history. Its focus is the magic and treason trials in Rome (28.1) and Antioch (29.1–2). These accounts have long been recognised to be ambiguous, disjointed, highly selective, chronologically vague, and difficult to follow. It is argued here that these are deliberate devices. Ammianus' text artfully mirrors the events which it narrates. In the account of these trials the reader experiences something of the oppressive uncertainty, the destructive unpredictability, and the cruel whimsicality of autocracy.

*History written under autocracy about autocracy hands readers a role in the poetics of suspicion: they should be too sophisticated to chase a hint, too alert to be content with any narration; and ready to jump to conclusions, to follow the author beyond what can be documented. And not to trust the narrator too far.*[2]

*After the death of Julian, the Roman Empire was a different place.*[3]

## I. *Failure of Empire*

Julian is wounded. The stray thrust of a Persian cavalryman's spear has pierced his unprotected chest. The confused heat of battle gives way to the stillness of a lingering death-bed scene. Like the great suicidal philosophers of old, Julian is in no hurry to die; not at least until he has

[1] This paper profited greatly from the generous comments of all those at the 'Ammianus after Julian' workshop in June 2005; I should particularly like to mention Gavin Kelly, Jan Willem Drijvers, and Karla Pollmann. Warm thanks are due to the Ammianus 'Gang of Four' (Jan den Boeft, Jan Willem Drijvers, Daan den Hengst, and Hans Teitler) for ensuring that our time at Wassenaar was marked by the most elegant combination of intellectual rigour and amicable conviviality.

[2] John Henderson, 'Tacitus: the world in pieces', in: Idem, *Fighting for Rome: Poets and Caesars, History and Civil War* (Cambridge 1998) 257–300, at 260 n. 13.

[3] Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 181.

taken time to ruminate on the nature of the soul and to reflect, at some length, on his *Res Gestae*. Julian is warmly generous in praise of his own greatness. He singles out for particular note his moderation in times of peace and his refusal to be hot-headed in the prosecution of war. All is much as might be expected. Yet for all his foresight and deliberation, the expiring Julian fails to name a successor. He is more concerned to discuss philosophy than to resolve the pressing question of the moment. His last official utterance is little more than a pious platitude: *opto bonum post me repperiri rectorem*—'I wish that a good ruler may be found to follow me' (25.3.20).[4]

The final books of Ammianus' history, which stretch from one imperial death in Mesopotamia to another in the dust-choked mêlée of Adrianople, offer the reader one way of following Julian's inconclusive last testament to its unsatisfactory end. Nor at Adrianople did Valens get the opportunity to reflect on his own achievements. According to some, he fell wounded by an arrow and died almost immediately. His body was never recovered. According to others, the emperor was taken to an upper room in a nearby farmstead which was then set ablaze by enemy troops unaware of his presence (31.13.12–17). In the absence of any explicit imperial guidance, the reader—as Ammianus brings his *Res Gestae* to a close—is left to reflect on the fate of princes in the fifteen years since Julian's more eloquent death.

As has long been noticed, there is something rather disjointed about Ammianus' final books. They have (to quote John Matthews) 'a less cumulative, more episodic, air than those of their predecessors.'[5] It is as though the focus and coherence of a grand imperial narrative, particularly marked under Julian, is somehow steadily eroded. The final books lack the panoramic sweep of the Persian campaign or the interlocking tensions of the fatal contest between Constantius and Gallus. Narrative time, which has slowed to accommodate a detailed

[4] On this passage, see especially Anne-Marie Taisne, 'Ammien Marcellin, successeur de Tacite dans la description de la mort de Julien (*H.*, XXV, 1–4)', in: Raymond Chevallier, Rémy Poignault (eds.), *Présence de Tacite: Hommage au Professeur G. Radke*, Collection Caesarodunum 26bis, Centre de recherches A. Piganiol (Tours 1992) 243–256; J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV* (Leiden 2005) 100–101.

[5] John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 207, see too 227–228; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 181–183; Marie-Anne Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome V, Livres XXVI–XXVIII* (Paris 1984) 14–17; Guy Sabbah with notes by Laurent Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire, Tome VI, Livres XXIX–XXXI* (Paris 1999) VIII–XI.

account of Julian's reign and its immediate aftermath—with the twelve months between March 363 (the departure of the Roman army from Antioch) and February 364 (Jovian's death) occupying almost three books (23.2–25.10)—, resumes at the more rapid pace of two-and-a-half years per book.[6] The narrative will not linger again until book 31 and the campaign which leads to the disaster at Adrianople.

Equally striking is a shift in the arrangement of material. In part, this is an inevitable consequence of moving from a narrative constructed around a single emperor at war to the accession of Valentinian and Valens, and the political division of the empire. Books 23–25, save for five excursus (four brief, the longest on Persia itself), offer a continuous and tightly-knit account of the Persian expedition.[7] The middle of book 26 neatly marks out a transition to a new imperial settlement. 26.4.5–6 present a brief prospectus of the enemies pressing on the empire's Rhine-Danube, African, and eastern frontiers;[8] against this hostile background, the imperial brothers meet in Sirmium and then retire, Valentinian to Milan, Valens to Constantinople (26.5.4); the praetorian prefects in both East and West are noted (26.5.5); the emperors each assume the consulship (26.5.6); the Alamanni cross the German *limes* (26.5.7); Procopius revolts in the East and news reaches Valentinian on his way to Paris (26.5.8); Valentinian deals with the Alamanni but is uneasy about the security of the East (26.5.9–13). These last sections offer a final integrated view of the empire. Valentinian's concerns are wide-ranging: he sends Dagalaifus to the German frontier (26.5.9); he is anxious to know whether Valens is still alive (26.5.9); he considers returning to Illyricum to prevent Procopius seizing Pannonia (26.5.11); embassies from important cities entreat him to stay in Gaul (26.5.12); he sends trusted men to ensure that Africa is secure (26.5.14).

Here the historian interrupts. A new narrative structure is announced: 'we shall separate particular incidents putting them in the appropriate place, offering first an account of events in the eastern part of the empire and then of the wars against the barbarians, since most of these matters played themselves out both in the West and the East over

[6] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 32; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 206. The first half of book 25 covers only ten days, from June 17 until June 26, 363; see Den Boeft et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, IX.

[7] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 38–39; 23.4 (military engines); 23.6.1–84 (Persia); 23.6.85–88 (pearls); 25.9.7–11 (comparison of the surrender of Nisibis to other Roman defeats); 25.10.3 (comets).

[8] Roger S.O. Tomlin, 'Ammianus Marcellinus 26.4.5–6', *CQ* 29 (1979) 470–478.

the same months' (26.5.15). This division (to quote Timothy Barnes) 'is scrupulously observed':[9] until the proclamation of Valentinian II at 30.10 the narrative (aside from excursus and brief notices of the urban prefects in Rome) clearly shifts between military and political events in the West and the East. This arrangement contrasts markedly with previous compositional strategies. Book 20, for example, is as wide-ranging in its material as any of 26–31, dealing with Julian's revolt in Gaul and Constantius' expedition against Sapor. Ammianus takes care to guide the reader across the empire: there are explicit links made between Constantius in the East and Julian in Gaul (20.4.1, 20.6.1, 20.8.1–4, 20.9.1–5, 20.10.1, 20.11.1). The reader travels with Julian's envoys from Paris to Caesarea in Cappadocia (20.8.3, 20.8.19, 20.9.1). Action and reaction are closely coordinated.[10] Such an interconnection between East and West is briefly on view (as noted above) in book 26.5, as Valentinian considers the implications of Procopius' revolt, but it quickly fades away. Aside from the intervention of Equitius in Thrace (26.10.4), the suppression of the revolt is entirely an eastern matter (26.6–10).[11] Valentinian himself is mentioned just three times and then only in passing: once when falsely rumoured dead (26.7.3) and twice to note his consulship (26.9.1, 26.10.15).

Indeed, as the narrative of the final books moves forward, there seems in some instances an almost deliberate emphasis on the difficulty of transition from one subject to another. In book 28 the long opening account of the trials in Rome is explicitly marked off as a deviation from the main matters at hand: *verum unde huc fleximus, revertamur* (28.1.57). Nor is the promise to conclude the story of its principal protagonist Maximinus ever to be fulfilled.[12] The next section, which deals with Valentinian's military activity on the Rhine frontier and the brigandage of the Maratocupreni in Syria (with no explicit mention of Valens), concludes with the rather uncomfortable observation: *et haec quidem textu processere narrato* (28.2.14). The scene shifts immediately to Britain (28.3) and then back to Rome, save that this section opens with the explanation: *diu multumque a negotiis discussus urbanis* (28.4.1). On the face of it, this is difficult to reconcile with the long account of the

[9] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 39.

[10] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 102–103.

[11] Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002) 81–82.

[12] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 211, 216; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 246.

city in the opening section of the book. Again the material on Rome is sharply separated from the rest of the narrative—*sit satis interim haec digessisse super rebus urbanis* (28.4.35)—which moves to Gaul and finally lights on Tripolitania—*tamquam in orbem migrantes alium* (28.6.1). Nor at the most basic level of chronology are these compositional blocks easily coordinated. The opening and closing sections of book 28 slide out of kilter with their central focus on 368–370: the narrative of the trials in Rome runs forward to 374/375; the account of the problems in Tripolitania, itself previously deferred (27.9.3), covers 363–375.[13]

Such a disjunctive tactic is deliberate. In these final books the scenes shift rapidly. The reader is discouraged from trying to find some greater degree of coherence in the events beyond their narration. Unity has been broken. As Ammianus has directed: *competenti loco singula digeremus* (26.5.15). The imperial brothers—together or apart—fall short in any comparison with Julian (26.10.8); Valens contemplates abandoning his throne to a usurper (26.7.13); the frontiers are under repeated attack from Alamanni, Huns, and Persians; the provinces under repeated threat from revolts. These conflicts dominate the narrative. Valentinian's near annual campaigns against the Alamanni stand in stark contrast to their decisive defeat by Julian at the Battle of Strasbourg.[14] What success there is depends as much on emperors as on the activities of their subordinates (30.7.11): Jovinus is victorious in Gaul (27.2); Equitius protects Illyricum (26.7.11–12) and besieges Philippopolis in Thrace (26.10.4); Theodosius defends Britain and Africa (27.8, 28.3, 29.5); his son secures Moesia (29.6.15–16). Efforts to coordinate the resources of the eastern and western empires are thwarted. Gratian, marching east in support of Valens, arrives after the rout at Adrianople. His (perhaps deliberately) halting progress towards reunification is here signalled by the broken advance of the narrative: delayed by an invasion of the Alamannic Lentienses, Gratian starts from Raetia at 31.10.20 and arrives in Sirmium in 31.11.6 (where he is further delayed by fever and the attacks

[13] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 207–208, 213–214; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 245–246; on the chronology of these troubles in Tripolitania, see Brian H. Warmington, *The North African Provinces from Diocletian to the Vandal Conquest* (Cambridge 1954) 9–11; idem, 'The Career of Romanus, Comes Africae', *ByzZ* 49 (1956) 55–64, at 59; Alexander Demandt, 'Die Feldzüge des älteren Theodosius', *Hermes* 100 (1972) 81–113, at 94–111.

[14] Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae (Paris 1978) 499–501; explicit parallels at 27.1.1 and 29.4.2.

of Alan raiders). And, in the end, all this effort is wasted as Valens elects to give battle in order to avoid sharing the glory of the victory (31.12.7).[15]

This is an empire gradually slipping out of imperial control. Ammianus' narrative—with its "jagged" edges and self-proclaimed lack of interconnectedness—suggests something of that disintegration. Books 26–31, in marked contrast to books 23–25, are more difficult to read, the connections between events more difficult to discern. And like the narrative, the empire is in ever-present danger of fragmenting: the centre weakened by usurpers; the periphery under continual attack. Here Rome's enemies loom large, harrying the defending armies, threatening to engulf the narrative itself. No longer victorious in war, no longer able to maintain the integrity of the empire, the Romans now risk being relegated to the frontiers, stranded on the margins of their own history. For Valentinian and Valens—in marked contrast to Julian—this is a world on which it is increasingly difficult to impose any kind of unity; a fissiparous state whose provinces are ever more resistant to the exercise of imperial authority. For Ammianus' readers, this is a history—in marked contrast to books 23–25—on which it is increasingly difficult to impose any kind of unity; a fissiparous text whose divergent narratives are ever more resistant to coherent thematic interpretation.

## II. *Magic and Treason*

The decomposing structure of the final books of Ammianus' *Res Gestae* is also one which is played out in greater detail in some of its key compositional blocks. Accounts of trials for magic, adultery, and treason open books 28 and 29. Both have rightly been seen as central to the portrayal of Valentinian and Valens, and to Ammianus' understanding of the way in which the exercise of imperial power might be represented.[16] At their most disturbing, these trials are sharp evo-

[15] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 206; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 336, 356–367.

[16] For a balanced judgement on the political significance of these trials, see the excellent accounts in Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 218–234; John F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–425* (Oxford 1990; rev. ed.) 56–63; with more detailed discussions in Pierre Hamblenne, 'Une "conjuration" sous Valentinien?', *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 198–225; Altay Coşkun, 'Ammianus Marcellinus und die Prozesse in Rom (*a.* 368/69–71/74)', *Tyche* 15 (2000) 63–92, especially 81–86; Alexander Demandt, 'Der Tod des älteren Theodosius', *Historia* 18 (1969) 598–626, especially 607–613. All distance them-

cations of the oppressive uncertainty, the destructive unpredictability, and the cruel whimsicality of autocracy. Imperial anger at accusations of magic and treason was fuelled by the well-turned flattery of courtiers (28.1.10, 28.1.51, 29.1.10–11, 29.1.19–20, 29.2.9–10). Justice was downtrodden in a world without reason or order (29.2.11); a world in which condemnation preceded suspicion (29.1.18); a world of disfiguring torture, stifling darkness, and suffocating prisons (28.1.16, 28.1.54–55, 29.1.13, 29.1.24, 29.1.40, 29.2.3). 'The whole place echoed with the terrifying cries of a cruel voice, as those who discharged their painful duties shouted amidst the noise of chains: "Hold; clamp; tighten up; take him away"' (29.1.23). The innocent and the guilty were slaughtered together like cattle (29.1.25, 29.1.40); even the executioners were exhausted (29.1.40). Some of the accused, no matter how great their alleged crimes, remained unharmed because of their connections (28.1.27, 29.2.17); others, though apparently innocent, were damned by association (29.1.37, 29.1.42); a few escaped, seemingly for no reason at all (29.1.44).

In all this dark confusion the emperors' agents prospered, some despite being guilty of the same offences for which they condemned the accused (28.1.7, 29.2.6). In Rome, Maximinus, 'poured out the innate savagery implanted in his hard heart, as is often the case with wild beasts in the amphitheatre, when at last they shatter the back-gates of

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selves from an attempt to see the trials as a senatorial conspiracy in Rome, or the purge of 'die heidnische Opposition' in Antioch, or as the consequence of the advancement of Pannonians into prominent positions in the 360s and 370s. On these views, see, for example, Franz Josef Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens und die heidnische Opposition* (Bonn 1995) especially 106–111, 116–119, 163–177; Johannes Straub, *Heidnische Geschichtsapologetik in der christlichen Spätantike: Untersuchungen über Zeit und Tendenz der Historia Augusta* (Bonn 1963) especially 70–74; Constant Schuurmans, 'Valentinien I et le sénat romain', *AC* 18 (1949) 25–38; André Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris 1960) 430–432; E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge 1947; repr. Groningen 1969) 101–107; Andreas Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire: The Clash between the Senate and Valentinian I* (Oxford 1952) 65–84; Marie-Anne Marié, 'Deux sanglants épisodes de l'accession au pouvoir d'une nouvelle classe politique: les grands procès de Rome et d'Antioche chez Ammien Marcellin *Res Gestae* XXVII, 1; XXIX, 1 et 2', in: Louis Holtz, Jean-Claude Fredouille (eds.), *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes: Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*: I. *Antiquité tardive et Christianisme ancien (IIIe–VIe siècles)* (Paris 1992) 349–360, at 354–360. On Ammianus' treatment of the trials, I have profited in particular from the discussion in Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 209–226 and from the approaches of Sabbah, *La méthode*, especially 405–506 and François Paschoud, '"Se non è vero, è ben trovato": tradition littéraire et vérité historique chez Ammien Marcellin', *Chiron* 19 (1989) 37–54. On the chronology of the trials in Rome, see Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 241–246, Appendix 9.

their cages and are set loose' (28.1.10). Like the basilisk he was dangerous from a distance (28.1.41). Maximinus' close associate Leo, 'snorting cruelty from his bestial maw, was himself no less greedy for human blood' (28.1.12). In Antioch, Heliodorus, 'that hellish fabricator of every evil' (29.2.6), used his position at court to promote false accusations against the innocent. These men imitated their masters; so too Valens, 'like a wild beast trained for the arena…vented his rage in violent fits' (29.1.27).

This is a world turned upside-down. Here men behave like beasts; here nightmares slide into waking reality (28.1.16); here clemency and cruelty are confused (28.1.40, 29.1.22); here an emperor might issue an edict and later deny all knowledge (28.1.11, 28.1.24–25); here a lesser penalty might be thought worse than a death sentence (29.1.21); here an appeal to the emperor sometimes succeeds (28.1.22), sometimes fails (28.1.56), and sometimes leads to even greater punishment (28.1.26). Here pitiless madness holds arbitrary sway.

> Indeed, at that time, to put it briefly, we all crept around as if in Cimmerian darkness, trembling with the same fears as the guests of Dionysius of Sicily, who, when sated with banquets more dismal than any hunger, to their horror they saw, hanging from the highest part of the ceiling in the rooms where they reclined, swords suspended above their heads by single horsehairs (29.2.4).

This is a bleak narrative of a society at war with itself. Amidst the massacres of the innocent, Bellona set both Rome and Antioch ablaze (28.1.1, 29.2.20). In the face of such crimes, 'the unsleeping eye of Justice, the witness and everlasting avenger of deeds, kept close watch' (29.2.20).

A cooler reading of the material assembled at 28.1 and 29.1–2 might, at the very least, offer a more complicated and less certain set of condemnations. The account of the trials and executions in Rome is far from straightforward. It is marked by a number of narrative dead-ends, irresolutions, and ambiguities.[17] Importantly too, it is deliberately

[17] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 48 seems to me correct in seeing these as deliberate tactics ('ce n'est ni par inadvertance, ni par embarras'), but it is less certain that these are, as Sabbah goes on to suggest, a result of Ammianus' supposed view that a detailed chronology was not a principal concern of grand narrative. For Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 104 'the uncharacteristic obscurity of this part of our historian's narrative' is itself evidence that the account of the trials mask a senatorial conspiracy; for Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens*, 163–168 (discussion of the trials in Antioch) a pagan opposition. François Paschoud, for example, in, 'Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien', in:

dislocated from two other treatments of the city: an approving notice of the severe measures taken by the urban prefect Apronianus (in office, 363)[18] to check—not altogether successfully—the illegal use of poisons and magic (26.3); and the long description of Roman society which offers a detailed and highly-critical assessment of the morals, attitudes, and priorities of the city's inhabitants (28.4).[19]

The confrontation between 28.1 and 28.4 is striking. Although clearly coordinate in time, these versions are deliberately juxtaposed in their concerns and subject matter. The reader receives no help at all in reconciling these contrasting accounts of the same city, one evoking deep sympathy, the other provoking risible contempt. Indeed, the failure to establish a link is paraded: *diu multumque a negotiis discussus urbanis* (28.4.1). Nor at 28.4 does Ammianus make any explicit reference to the trials for magic: 'it is as if he had totally forgotten his account of the prosecutions'.[20] Indeed, astrology is now a matter for witty, light-hearted satire at the expense of those whom it is alleged cannot eat, bathe, or appear in public without first consulting their astronomical tables to determine the disposition of the planets or the motion of the moon through the zodiac (28.4.24). Similarly, the urban prefects Olybrius and Ampelius, during whose time in office the investigations into magic, treason, and adultery were fiercely prosecuted, hardly rate a critical mention in 28.1; although a much more acerbic account of their personal vanities is offered at 28.4. Even so, there is an obvious and uncomfortable disjunction in tone and scale: 28.1 deals with executions and false accusations; yet 28.4.1 praises Olybrius' prefecture for being 'remarkably peaceable and mild'; 28.4.2 notes as the regrettable weaknesses in his character a liking for the theatre and a series of amours; 28.4.3–5, again with

J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 67–84, on book 28 at 78–79, has argued that the apparent contradictions in Ammianus' narrative reflect incompatible source material. On the face of it, it seems a reasonable proposition that Ammianus was aware of various historiographical traditions, but it also remains the case that he adopted a very particular compositional strategy to capture (and, in my view, exploit) their divergence. Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 216 suggests that these anomalies might also be indications that 'the historian failed fully to master, or to revise thoroughly—or both—his complicated source material.'

[18] Timothy D. Barnes, 'New Year 363 in Ammianus Marcellinus. Annalistic Technique and Historical Apologetics', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 1–8, at 5–6.

[19] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 214–217.

[20] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 214.

no mention of the trials, offers a wry account of the prefect Ampelius' ineffectual attempts to restrain the gluttonous excesses of the people of Rome by restricting the opening hours of wine-bars, regulating the sale of cooked meats, and prohibiting 'anyone of the better sort from being seen eating in public' (28.4.4).[21]

The account of the trials itself also bears closer examination. Certainly, there is an impressive and varied roll-call of those charged, including amongst others: the lawyer Marinus (28.1.14); the *consiliarius* Frontinus (28.1.21); the senators Cethegus, Hymetius, Tarracius Bassus, Camenius, Marcianus, Eusafius, Paphius, Cornelius, Eumenius, Avienus, and Aginatius (28.1.16–17, 28.1.27, 28.1.29, 28.1.48, 28.1.50–56); the comptroller of the Roman mint (28.1.29); the noble youth Alypius (28.1.16); the soothsayers Campensis and Amantius (28.1.8, 28.1.19–21, 28.1.29); the wrestler Asbolius (28.1.8, 28.1.29); the organ-builder Sericus (28.1.8, 28.1.29); the charioteer Auchenius (28.1.27); Lollianus, the son of the former urban prefect Lampadius (28.1.26); Rufina (28.1.44–45) and Claritas/Charitas, Flaviana, Hesychia, Fausiana, and Anepsia, all women from distinguished families (28.1.28, 28.1.47–56).[22]

Most of these are given short notices emphasising the injustice of their accusation or punishment. In some cases the account is so brief it is not possible for the reader to judge the truth of the allegations. 'Then the senator Cethegus, a defendant on a charge of adultery, was beheaded, and the noble youth Alypius was banished for a trivial misdemeanour, and others of lesser status were publicly put to death' (28.1.16). Sometimes those charged are clearly guilty: 'Then, in addition, the senators Paphius and Cornelius, who had both confessed to having defiled themselves with the perverted knowledge of poisons, were put to death on the sentence of that same Maximinus' (28.1.29). Nor is it suggested that Claritas/Charitas, Flaviana, or Rufina were innocent of sexual offences (28.1.28, 28.1.45), or that Lollianus did not write a book on black magic (28.1.26)—the point is that they were convicted, perhaps even without trial, and that their punishment was too severe.

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[21] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 211–212; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 119; Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas*, 71–72.

[22] There are useful catalogues of those involved in Hamblenne, 'Une "conjuration"', 203–205; Roger C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels 1975) 117–118, 189–190 (both Rome and Antioch); on social status, see conveniently Hamblenne, 'Une "conjuration"', 205–206; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 58–59.

In other cases, the matter is left unresolved. It is not clear whether Sericus, Asbolius, and Campensis did in fact attempt to poison Chilo and his wife (28.1.8); or whether Tarracius Bassus and his associates were fairly accused of similar crimes (28.1.27); or whether Avienus was guilty of some sexual misconduct with both Fausiana and Anepsia, or what in the end happened to his friend, Eumenius (28.1.48, 28.1.50).[23] Indeed the account of the main series of accusations is prefaced by Ammianus' open admission that any knowledgeable readers who subject his account to careful scrutiny might well be able to find that some events have been omitted or others presented out of chronological order (28.1.15). There are some difficulties immediately evident to those with information outside the text: Chilo is introduced as a former *vicarius*, although he is yet to hold the office (28.1.8); no mention is made of the fact that the urban prefect Olybrius is the brother of Alypius, one of the accused (28.1.16); no reference at all is made to Bappo, Principius, or Flavius Eupraxius, all of whom were in office as urban prefect during these events.[24]

Uncertainties also surround two of the set-piece trials. Hymetius is first introduced with a reminder of the accusation of fraud which was made against him while proconsul of Africa in 366–368 (28.1.17–18). Valentinian suspected Hymetius of profiteering from a shortage of grain in Carthage and only returning part of his subsequent windfall to the treasury; found guilty he was fined.[25] The extent of Hymetius' association with magic and treason in Rome is obscure. Although, even under torture, he denied any involvement, this was disproved by a document (not by hearsay or by unfounded accusations) in his own handwriting which requested the soothsayer Amantius to perform a sacrifice on his behalf. The purpose, again not at all clear, was apparently to gain the

[23] On these various accusations, see helpfully Hamblenne, 'Une "conjuration"', 206–208.

[24] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 57, 61–62; *The Roman Empire*, 212; Chastagnol, *La prefecture*, 430–431; Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 139; Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas*, 70; Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire V*, 276 nn. 325–326, 282 n. 364; Demandt, 'Der Tod des älteren Theodosius', 609–611. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 205, 237–240, reviving a suggestion of Otto Seeck, 'Die Reihe der Stadtpräfecten bei Ammianus Marcellinus', *Hermes* 18 (1883) 289–303, argues that the names of the urban prefects have been lost in a substantial lacuna at 29.5.1.

[25] On this incident, see the discussion in Pieter de Jonge, 'A Curious Place in Ammianus Marcellinus, Dealing with Scarcity of Corn and Cornprices', *Mnemosyne* 1 (1948) 73–80; and the ingenious attempt by Thompson, *The Historical Work*, 138–140 to make Ammianus' narrative cohere.

favour of the emperors. The document also contained some critical references to Valentinian's harshness and avarice. At least from one point of view, it is not difficult to see why the emperor might demand that this matter be pursued with particular force (28.1.19–21).

Similarly, the case of Aginatius is not straightforward. His claims to a noble lineage were allegedly based more on persistent report (*pertinacior fama*) than on any documentary proof (28.1.30).[26] That neat distinction, ironically crucial in determining the probity of any judicial proceeding, is not maintained. Aginatius' nobility will subsequently be reported as a matter of undisputed fact (28.1.52, 28.1.54), just as a series of unproven accusations will subsequently be taken as evidence of his guilt. Aginatius is involved from the outset in the troubles in Rome. Resentful that the urban prefect Olybrius had passed the case of Chilo and his wife (who had accused Sericus, Asbolius, and Campensis of attempting to poison them) to Maximinus as *praefectus annonae* rather than to him as *vicarius*, Aginatius wrote a secret letter to the praetorian prefect, Petronius Probus, outlining how Maximinus might be eliminated (28.1.31–33). The reader is left to fill in events; most immediately in the light of the character sketch of Probus at 27.11, a man who rose to the highest offices on the swift wings of fortune 'which revealed him at times to be generous and keen to ensure the further advancement of his friends, and on other occasions a deadly strategist' (27.11.2). Aginatius had misjudged his man. Probus, it was later claimed, secretly sent the letter straight to Maximinus (28.1.33).

Nor did Aginatius' difficulties end here. He accused the recently deceased Victorinus of having received money to influence Maximinus' judgements and also threatened Victorinus' widow, Anepsia, with litigation (28.1.34). The probity of these accusations is difficult to determine. Shortly before, Victorinus had been introduced as 'the closest friend' of Maximinus and able (or so it was widely rumoured) to use his influence to secure acquittals (28.1.27). On the other hand, Victorinus also seems to have been associated with Aginatius, to whom he left a sizeable legacy in his will (28.1.34). Aginatius' action against Anepsia is at the very best unjustified—*petulantia* (28.1.34). Worse still, it drives Anepsia to seek further help from Maximinus, declaring that Victorinus had left him a fortune in his will and agreeing that her daughter should marry his son (28.1.35). The conclusion is a dark and bloody farce.

[26] On the difficulties in reading this passage, Sabbah, *La méthode*, 131, 134–135; and, with full discussion and bibliography, Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire V*, 280–281 n. 355.

Anepsia is discovered (when one of her own slaves turns informer) to be harbouring Avienus and along with Faustina is accused of sexual misconduct. Avienus, now also accused of the same crime with Anepsia, is put to death. In turn, Anepsia, fearing for her own life, alleges that she was the victim of magic arts and had herself been assaulted while in Aginatius' house. Maximinus seizes the opportunity to instigate a further investigation through his henchman Doryphorianus, now *vicarius* in Rome. This time there is no reprieve; both Aginatius and Anepsia are executed (28.1.48–56).[27]

This account, at times ambiguous and uncertain about the nature and veracity of some of the accusations and unhelpfully vague in mapping the real relationships between the parties, is further broken up by the separation of the two halves of the story (28.1.30–35, 28.1.48–56). That deliberate division works against the formation of some potentially coherent themes. It might have been possible, for example, explicitly to connect Maximinus' legacy-hunting and the marriage of his son to Anepsia's daughter with his aim to eliminate Anepsia herself and to secure for his family all of Victorinus' wealth. Certainly, Q. Aurelius Symmachus in an oration delivered in 376 (after both Valentinian and Maximinus were safely dead) made precisely that point: *nullae iam nuptiae caesa parente iunguntur nec funeri succedit hymenaeus neque flammeo vestis atra mutatur*, 'henceforth no marriages are to be performed on the death of a mother, nor a wedding to be followed by a funeral, nor the black garment of mourning to be exchanged for the flame-coloured bridal veil'.[28] Ammianus' silence does not rule out that possibility (at least for the attentive reader who carries forward information from the first half of the story). More importantly, Ammianus resists the reduction of a complex account to any simple pattern of connections or any single set of motivations. In this version, all involved are in some way compromised. Certainly (at least on the evidence here assembled against them), neither Aginatius nor Anepsia deserve to be executed. That said, it is difficult to see them as entirely innocent victims. Neither can claim to have had clean hands.

In Antioch too, not all who were subject to examination on charges of magic and treason can fairly be said to have been innocent bystanders. It is open to debate whether or not the two philosophers who

[27] On the offences involved, see Hamblenne, 'Une "conjuration"', 212–213 n. 35.

[28] Symm. *Or.* 4.13 (ed. Otto Seeck, MGH AA 6.1 at p. 335); see Sabbah, *La méthode*, 338 n. 71, and, generally, Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 67–68.

admitted knowledge of a plot to depose Valens were to be believed in their claim that as men of principle they intended to keep the secret confided to them (29.1.37, 29.1.42). Others who had no such connection were (like many in Rome) caught up in the terror of the investigations: Diogenes, Alypius, Hierocles, Bassianus, Eusebius, and Hypatius (29.1.43–44, 29.2.5, 29.2.9–11). The last two were fined and exiled on false charges described in some detail; by contrast—in something of a narrative *cul-de-sac*—no information is given on the process which led to their recall and restoration to their former rank (29.2.11).

What is unavoidably clear is the guilt of Theodorus, the central figure in the plot against Valens. At first, Theodorus tried to plea bargain. Seeking a pardon, he claimed that he had not been involved in the séance led by the adepts Patricius and Hilarius (philosopher and former palatine bureaucrat) which had sought to divine the name of the next emperor (29.1.34). A tripod had been constructed from laurel twigs; on top was placed a tray cast from various metals and engraved with the letters of the Greek alphabet. Above this Ouija board, a consecrated ring had then been suspended on a linen thread; in response to the request to reveal the identity of Valens' successor the swinging ring spelt out the four letters TH E O D. All present took this to refer to Theodorus (29.1.29–32). In court, Theodorus himself claimed (rather weakly) that while he had been informed of the affair and had intended to report it to the authorities, he had not done so, thinking it rather the will of fate than any treasonable attempt at usurpation. His version was exposed as false by a letter in his own hand whose coded language (nothing in accusations of magic is ever quite what it seems) indicated that 'he did not hesitate about the matter, but looked for an opportunity to achieve his desire' (29.1.35).

Valens' reaction to the discovery of the plot was to demand even more brutally searching investigations.

> His monstrous savagery ranged far and wide like a brightly blazing firebrand (29.1.10); it was unpardonable that, swollen with imperious rage, together and under the same law he was swift to press on in the evil-intentioned pursuit of the innocent and the guilty, making no distinction between them on the basis of what they might deserve (29.1.18); he had now completely abandoned the paths of equity (29.1.27).

But these criticisms are not always in comfortable conformity with the narrative as it unfolds. They tend to run ahead of the action. Most obviously, as the investigations progress, Valens' insistence that the accusations of treasonable magic practices should be examined does in

fact expose a plot; in Noel Lenski's arresting phrase, 'Valens's [trials] overturned a seamy rock of conspiracy under which were crawling some truly threatening creatures'.[29]

For Ammianus' contemporary readers (as Guy Sabbah has observed) the results would have been even more striking. Hilarius' description of the oracular consultation revealed in detail practices which were still illegal.[30] The plot followed a number of instances, described at some length, in which attempts had been made on Valens' life (29.1.15–16). The conspirators had aimed to advance both their cause and their chosen candidate, Theodorus. They were responsible for 'an endless coil of crimes' (29.1.6); 'a production line of criminality'—*sceleris officina* (29.1.34). Under such circumstances, the determination of where guilt and responsibility should properly lie might be seen as more complicated than the stark criticisms of Valens might first imply. An alternative formulation is offered without further discussion: 'And even if anyone should allow that these things were correctly done, yet their very excess was hateful' (29.1.22).

Something of that difficulty of fit between narrative and commentary is evident, even after it is clear that the investigations have spiralled terrifyingly out of control and Valens himself now shows 'neither restraint nor shame' (29.2.12), his actions further revealing 'the complete putrescent stupidity of the empire's ruler' (29.2.14). His outrages are the new *laudes Valentis* (29.2.17). Here the narrative is interrupted to offer two pieces of philosophical advice on the proper administration of justice. The first, quoting Julius Caesar, is straightforward: that no death sentence should be passed without long and careful consideration (29.2.18).[31] A second *sententia* concerns a case said to have been referred to the Areopagus in Athens in the 40s BC during Cornelius Dolabella's term as governor of Asia. A woman from Smyrna was accused of poisoning her husband and son, but submitted in her defence that she had discovered that they had murdered her son by a previous marriage. This was a clear problem in equity. After some consideration, 'in order neither to acquit a poisoner nor to punish the avenger of her family', the judges adjourned the case for a hundred years (29.2.19).[32]

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[29] Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 226 and, generally, 229–230, 233–234.

[30] Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, XXIV–XXV.

[31] The quotation is not attested elsewhere; Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, 181–182 n. 86.

[32] The anecdote is also recounted in Val. Max. 8.1 amb. 2 (ed. John Briscoe [Stutt-

Aside from this being another gesture at the advantages of judicial dilatoriness, there is some ambiguity as to how far the "Areopagus principle" might be thought reasonably to apply to the circumstances in Antioch. It can hardly refer to those innocent of the offences of which they were accused. Nor is it clear if it should encompass Theodorus and his co-conspirators, particularly given the information on the previous attempts on Valens' life and their subsequent admission of guilt. Or are they an obvious exception to this rule? The analogy with laudable antique practice—placed at a crucial point in the narrative—provokes more questions than it settles. Most importantly, it again raises the issue (and here in the middle of the terrors in Antioch) of whether on the evidence it would have been reasonable or just for Valens simply to have let the conspirators go? In this case would the 'implacable Athenian judges'—*Athenienses iudices tristiores* (29.2.19)—have called for an adjournment?[33]

## III. *The Rush to Judgement*

Taken together, the jagged features of these accounts—the isolation of events in Rome, the compromising presentation of some of the accused in both Rome and Antioch, the inconclusive and ambiguous nature of parts of the narrative, and the sometimes uncomfortable fit between narrative and commentary—expose the subtleties of Ammianus' version. Clearly (and at its most obvious) the events in Rome and Antioch and the emphasis on Valens' and Valentinian's excessive cruelty and uncontrolled anger allow an easy and unfavourable comparison with Julian's careful exercise of justice.[34]

> The laudable traits for which he was celebrated in his giving of justice are evidenced by many examples…it is recognised that he was so merciful

gart / Leipzig 1998]) and Aulus Gellius, *NA* 12.7; Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, 182 n. 87.

[33] There are further complications. It is not clear how the ruling of the Areopagus can easily be reconciled with the view of Demosthenes, approvingly cited at 30.1.23, that 'no act which is proved to be against the law is to be excused because another similar crime went unpunished'; see Dem. *Or.* 22.7 (ed. Mervin R. Dilts [Oxford 2005]); also cited in Quint. *Inst.* 5.14.4 and Aulus Gellius, *NA* 10.19.3. It is also worth noting that 28.1 opens with an analogy, in which Ammianus claims to find himself in a similar situation to the Athenian playwright Phrynichus (28.1.3–4), a comparison which, in some respects, also seems rather ill-fitting; see Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 209.

[34] Coşkun, 'Ammianus Marcellinus und die Prozesse in Rom', 85.

> towards some of his enemies who openly plotted to overthrow him, that as a result of his natural gentleness he found fault with the harshness of their punishments (25.4.8–9).[35]

While Julian dies philosophically in his tent musing on the eternity of the soul, Valens is lost in battle and Valentinian expires speechless, fighting for breath in a choleric fit brought on by an outburst of anger (30.6.3–6).[36]

It is starkly self-evident that neither emperor is his predecessor's equal (26.10.8). And this is a difference realised in the text. The rhetorical evocation of the brutal horror of the magic and treason trials, of the uncertainty of their outcome, and of their cynical exploitation by the emperors' subordinates, allows Ammianus' readers to experience for themselves something of the sheer terror of autocracy. Here the very instability and ambiguity of Ammianus' account—its dead-ends, its irresolutions, its illogicalities—enact something of the arbitrary and unpredictable operation of imperial power itself. The final catalogue of those condemned to death in Antioch for magical practices has a deliberately ridiculous quality which emphasises the cruel perversion of the everyday in a crazed and fatal Looking Glass world: a philosopher whose quotation of a proverbial saying was misinterpreted; a harmless old woman who used a charm to cure fever; a well-heeled provincial who claimed that the horoscope of a Valens found amongst his papers was really that of his long-dead brother; a young man who recited incantations in the public baths as a remedy for stomach pains (29.2.25–28). Ammianus' readers—as if themselves creeping around in some Cimmerian darkness—are not always able to find a convincing connection between suspicion and condemnation, not always able to discern with clarity the motivation of those involved, not always able to test the evidence, to apply precedents, or easily to distinguish the guilty from the innocent.[37]

Importantly too, that same instability and ambiguity underline the dangers of reaching any too hasty judgement on the characters of Valentinian and Valens. They are a timely warning against repeating the error of both the emperors and the conspirators in Antioch.

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[35] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 445, 499–506; Marié, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire V*, 7–8; Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 68–69.

[36] Sabbah, *La méthode*, 501 n. 140.

[37] Christopher M. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. London 2004) 196–197.

According to the testimony of Hilarius, when the conspirators had consulted their carefully constructed and sanctified Ouija board on the identity of the next emperor, the ring hanging from its fine linen thread indicated in turn four letters: TH E O D (29.1.32). Those gathered round did not pause to request further information. In previous consultations they had waited for the ring to supply answers by spelling out complete hexameter verses (29.1.31). But this time, on the basis of these four letters alone, one of the inquirers cried out that it was Theodorus who was meant. 'And the matter was not examined any further; it was enough that we agreed amongst ourselves that this was the man whose name had been invoked' (29.1.32).

The reader, of course, in one of the finest examples of dramatic irony in Ammianus, knows right from the outset (some time before Hilarius' detailed and technical account of the ritual involved) that the conspirators have got it fatally wrong. Theodorus was never their man. They were in part led astray by his character—*modestia, prudentia, humanitate, gratia, litteris ornatissimus* (29.1.8)—, a ringing echo of Julian's admirable qualities.[38] (Although an evaluation also clearly suspect in the light of Theodorus' subsequent dishonest denials of his involvement in any plot.) In part, the conspirators' error was a failure to wait for the ring to spell out a complete name. Just one more letter would have made all the difference, that is, assuming (perhaps too hastily…) that such matters are discoverable by divination or that the answer would have been any less ambiguous than the hexameter verses they had previously recorded. These, it was later alleged, correctly predicted Valens' death at Adrianople 'while Ares storms in fury on the plains of Mimas'—but only (and somewhat unhelpfully) in retrospect (29.1.33, 31.14.8).[39]

Despite such fragmentary evidence and these all too evident oracular ambiguities, in naming Theodorus the conspirators rushed to an irreversible conclusion. So too Valens, Valentinian, and their subordinates. The innocent (and perhaps too the guilty) were condemned on partial, inadequate, or fabricated evidence (28.1.14, 28.1.36): 'whatever he [Valens] had heard whispered to him (for this purpose, he was as easily accessible as a private citizen) he forbore in his imperial arrogance to investigate whether it was true, remaining satisfied that it was both true

[38] Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens*, 111–116.

[39] Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 226–227; Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, 288–289 n. 565.

and proven' (29.1.20). Sweeping condemnations were arbitrarily issued, punishing all involved (28.1.11, 29.1.38, 29.1.40, 29.2.3): 'so that while there was still doubt concerning the offence, the emperor [Valens] had no doubt about the penalty, and some learned that they had been condemned even before they knew that they had been suspected' (29.1.18).

In any determination of the character of the emperors, Ammianus' text sets a similar trap for the unwary reader. The account of the trials in Rome (before any information has been given) opens with an elaborate series of authorial doubts and fears as to the appropriateness of offering a 'blood-stained series of events' (28.1.2); 'would that these had been consigned to everlasting silence' (28.1.1). At Antioch too, the condemnatory commentary on the emperor's actions seems at times to run ahead of the narration. Moreover, like the emperors' investigators, the text piles accusation on accusation. The trials conclude with a set of four stories (noted above) hardly credible in their perversion of justice: Festinus the new governor of Asia condemns a philosopher prone to quoting proverbs, a harmless old woman with a charm against fever, a man who once cast the horoscope of his long-dead brother, and a youth seeking relief from stomach ache (29.2.25–28). They are immediately followed by a collection of anecdotes illustrating the viciousness of Valentinian: a page who lets a hunting dog slip is ordered to be beaten to death (29.3.3); so too an armourer whom the emperor believed had cheated him out of a small weight of iron (29.3.4); the *magister equitum* Theodosius, presenting a petition at court on behalf of a governor who wished to change the province which he had been allocated, is met with the imperial riposte 'Go, commander, and change his head, since he wished to change his province' (29.3.6); and (most notoriously of all) Valentinian is said to have kept two man-eating bears in cages outside his bedroom in the imperial palace. He even gave these bloodthirsty pets affectionate names: *Mica aurea* and *Innocentia*, *Goldflake* and *Innocence*. 'Finally, after he had seen many burials of the corpses which *Innocence* had dismembered, as she was good and well-deserving, he discharged her and let her return to the forest unharmed, hoping that she would have cubs like herself' (29.3.9).[40]

[40] Valentinian's bears have excited much comment; see, for some more recent examples, Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 79–80; Guy Sabbah, 'Présences féminines dans l'*Histoire* d'Ammien Marcellin: les rôles politiques', in: J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (eds.), *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam 1992) 91–105, at 101–102; Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 260; Lenski, *Failure of*

What should the reader make of these stories? Are they, like the accounts of the condemned which precede them, to be understood as misrepresenting or distorting some plainer, more banal truth? Has a weak imperial witticism been interpreted over-literally, taken—like the platitudinous philosopher's proverb—completely out of context? What is to be made of crimes which in some cases are said to have left no trace (29.3.8), or of bears which have now returned to the forest? The truth or reliability of these accusations of cruelty (like so much at Antioch and Rome) cannot be finally determined. In issuing any blanket condemnation of the emperors' characters, the reader is in danger of behaving arbitrarily like an autocrat: 'so that while there was still doubt concerning the offence, the emperor had no doubt about the penalty' (29.1.18). Moreover, in accepting the invitation to believe that these stories are *indicia varia…et certa* (29.3.2), the reader may be at risk of reiterating Valens' own behaviour: 'whatever he had heard whispered to him…he forbore in his imperial arrogance to investigate whether it was true, remaining satisfied that it was both true and proven' (*an vera essent, excutere tumore principis supersidens pro veris accipiebat et certis*; 29.1.20).

The challenge to the reader is not to collude too closely with either emperors or conspirators. Rather, it is to seize on the ambiguities and inconcinnities in the account, to resist the drive to fill in the gaps and make coherent sense of the material, and so assemble a definitive case against the emperors themselves. For those preparing to pass sentence there is a final warning before the story of the emperor's bears: 'My mind shudders at the thought of reviewing all these instances, at the same time I fear that I might seem deliberately to have searched out the defects of an emperor who in other ways was highly suitable' (29.3.9). The reader (unlike an emperor) ought to take a judicious hint. There may be other versions, other possibilities, other interpretations. As if to underline the point, the account of Valentinian's bears peters out in a lacuna. It is as if the very text itself resisted the rush to judgement. And rightly so. The very next section opens with a stark reprise of the problem. 'These then are the certain proofs of Valentinian's habits and his propensity for cruelty' (29.4.1). By now the reader should be wary of being pushed further. Without comment, *indicia varia…et certa* (29.3.2) have treacherously slid into *documenta verissima*. But (unlike a

*Empire*, 231; Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens*, 177; Sabbah-Angliviel de la Beaumelle, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoire VI*, 185–186 n. 103.

treason trial) the emperor's sentence is deferred. 'No one, not even one of his most obstinate critics, will accuse him of ever deviating from his expert approach to matters of state' (*sollertiae vero circa rem publicam usquam digredientis nemo eum vel obtrectator peruicax incusabit*; 29.4.1).

Such dramatic juxtapositions are a striking feature of Ammianus' narrative style, on display long before the magic and treason trials. They are evident in the obituary notice for Constantius (21.16). There too (as I have suggested elsewhere) the refusal to reach a firm conclusion matched something of the terror and uncertainty of that emperor's arbitrary exercise of autocratic power.[41] It is unclear to the reader how a definitive judgement might be reached, or on what basis it might convincingly be supported. So too with Valentinian and Valens (30.8–9, 31.14).

> Then died Valens…of his merits, known to many, we shall now speak, and of his defects. He was a loyal and constant friend…a most impartial guardian of the provinces, protecting each of them from harm as he would his own household…He combined generosity with moderation …He distinguished sharply between justice and injustice…
>
> He had an uncontrollable desire for great wealth and being unwilling to undertake any hard work his great austerity was more of a pretence. He was inclined to cruelty…There was one thing also which could not be endured: although he wished to appear to conduct all legal disputes and judicial investigations in accordance with the laws and referred the examination of these matters to judges (even those regularly assigned to such cases seemed specially selected) nevertheless, he allowed nothing to be done contrary to his own caprice. He was in other ways unjust, hot tempered…idle and sluggish… (31.14.1–3, 31.14.5–7).

Here the unresolved opposition in the careful cataloguing of merits and defects also forms part of a wider narrative of fragmentation which (as suggested in section one) particularly distinguishes the disposition of material in the last six books of Ammianus' history. In book 28, the deliberate off-setting of two parallel narratives of Rome, at times seemingly incompatible, acts to disable any developing sense of unity or interconnectedness. In book 29, the juxtaposition of the condemnation of Valentinian's domestic cruelty and the praise of his military competence (without explanation or resolution) blurs any easy tracing of a coherent theme.

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[41] Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, 197–198. On Ammianus' necrologies, see helpfully Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 112–114, 237–241, 468–470; Paschoud, 'Valentinien travesti', 80–83; and especially Sabbah, *La méthode*, 445–453.

In both books 28 and 29, Valentinian and Valens, in their casual viciousness and disregard for justice, are paraded in opposition to Julian. Even so, their cruelty, although recounted in brutal detail, is not presented as the argumentative key to their characters. It is not a reliable basis on which they might be definitively judged. Ammianus' persuasive narrative, like an eloquent courtier, with veiled, but clever flattery (29.1.11), tempts the reader, but—knowingly, deliberately—fails to deliver. To hand down a final judgement would be to fall into a pattern of autocratic behaviour which this text seeks, by re-playing, both to expose and resist. It would risk repeating the error of the conspirators in Antioch who jumped too swiftly to a fatally wrong conclusion. Worse still, it might allow the reader to collude with the emperors (or with one of their subordinates), issuing all-encompassing condemnations on the basis of partial evidence.

The contrast with books 20–25 is clear. Here a more focused narrative, concentrated on a single emperor on campaign, moved steadily towards an overwhelmingly positive summation of Julian's character. The few criticisms cited are significantly more integrated (and in some cases almost argued away) as part of an overall attempt to offer a resolved and coherent portrait (25.4.16).[42] That very possibility underlines Julian's achievement. It gestures at a world which might have been restored. By contrast, the obituaries of Valentinian and Valens emphasise the impossibility of their ever realising that project. In books 26–31, the self-conscious emphasis on the jaggedness of the composition, the striking juxtapositions, and the self-evident failure to resolve opposing points of view, suggest to the reader a more disjointed and fragmentary world. The Roman Empire is breaking up: surrounded by enemies, divided between East and West, split between two rulers. A unified account, a final judgement, a clear-cut conclusion is not possible. From now on, until the end of these *Res Gestae*, Roman history can no longer sustain a grand narrative. From the very beginning of book 26, Ammianus' readers, like the empire's enemies, have crossed the frontiers: *dictis impensiore cura rerum ordinibus ad usque memoriae confinia proprioris* (26.1.1).

[42] Den Boeft et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, 112–113.

# *NON CONSOLANDI GRATIA, SED PROBROSE MONENDI* (*RES GESTAE* 28.1.4). THE HAZARDS OF (MORAL) HISTORIOGRAPHY

Jan den Boeft

*Abstract*: In books 26–31 of the *Res Gestae* Ammianus' authorial comments are more frequent than before. His assessment of the times of the emperors Valentinian and Valens is mainly negative and comes remarkably close to a passage in Augustine's *De civitate Dei*: crimes and vices abound, restraining mechanisms fail to prevent moral decline. Moralizing historiography, however, has its risks: some readers may conclude that crime pays and act accordingly, others will feel offended by the author's reproaches. Moreover, he seems to propagate a highly pessimistic view of the future. In a fictitious interview Ammianus rejects complaints of this kind and argues that his basic conviction about the salutary impact of truly responsible government in fact points to the possibilities of a better future.

In his recent article 'Ammianus and the Great Tsunami' Gavin Kelly remarks that the historian's 'first person interventions in the later books are exceptional'.[1] He refers to the words *nos transeundo conspeximus* (26.10.19) and with 'later books' he obviously means books 26–31. Insofar personal participation in the reported events is concerned—the phrase *inter quos ego quoque eram* (15.5.22) may serve as a "label"—Kelly's remark is no doubt correct. In the last six books we do not come across anything comparable to the Silvanus episode (15.5) or the dangerous experiences at Amida in book 19 or the Persian expedition. One could perhaps object that for all their literary techniques, the second Roman satire (28.4) and the attack on lawyers in the eastern part of the Roman Empire (30.4) testify to unpleasant personal experiences. Indeed, in the second case Ammianus himself says: *quam in illis partibus agens expertus sum* (30.4.4). However, the way in which he treats matters in the two chapters mentioned is far removed from the conspicuous personal presence in the episodes of Silvanus, Amida and Persia. As to the author explicitly mentioning himself as an eyewitness, Kelly seems also to be

[1] *JRS* 94 (2004) 141–167, at 142.

right. Phrases like *obeliscos vidimus plures* (17.4.6), *visa pleraque narrantes* (22.15.1), *nosque vidimus* (23.6.30) are less frequent, though by no means absent: *quae vidisse meminimus* (27.4.2), *addici post cruciabiles poenas vidimus multos* (29.1.24).

Summing up, one can agree that in the final hexad of the *Res Gestae* Ammianus shows himself less to the reader as a participant or an eyewitness than in books 14–25. This does not, however, entail that he has withdrawn to a detached position, from which he describes the events which he deems worthy of being reported. On the contrary, authorial comments have become more frequent, both in the form of critical judgment and condemnation, and of a tendency to render explicit account of his policies as a historiographer. Examples of remarks of the latter type are 26.5.15, in which section it is explained that first what took place in the East will be dealt with (in book 26), and then the events in the West (book 27), in order to evade a continuous hither and thither, with unclarity as a result, 27.9.3, where the decision to postpone matters in Africa for the time being is justified, and 29.5.1, where again the advantages of a coherent narrative are pointed out, in this case of Theodosius the Elder's suppression of Firmus' revolt. Other passages explain why the author has left out minor details, *minutias ignobiles* (27.2.11), namely in order that *ne per minutias gesta narrando rectum aliquatenus operis impediam cursum* (28.2.12). Obviously this is a point which Ammianus regards as highly important. In fact, we meet it straightaway at the beginning of book 26. In its very first sentence he states that it would have been opportune (*convenerat*) not to write about the period of Valentinian and Valens at all, in view of the expectable complaints of people who are devoid of any understanding of historiographical principles, which require a focus on *negotiorum celsitudines*, and who therefore want to be informed of trivial details. As far as I am concerned, this is an astonishing preface. The author's 'mission statement' is not an example of the topos of modesty: there is not a doubt in his mind that he is fully capable to fulfil his task. However, he has serious misgivings about (part of) his readers, who do not understand what historiography is about and how it should be practised. Nevertheless, *inscitia vulgari contempta* he will proceed. Until now I have not been able to find an ancient parallel for this aggressive preface, which is a harbinger of further remarks on the historian's art.[2]

[2] Cf. the remarks on the avoidance of *res leves* in the *Historia Augusta*: *Gd* 1.3–4, *Q* 6.3–4. Cf. also Herodian 1.1.2.

As was already noted, we can also witness a marked increase in outspoken judgments of persons and their behaviour, often in the form of undisguised condemnation.[3] The first example is the disgust expressed at the conduct of a certain senator at Rome: after having bought off the scandalous actions which he had perpetrated, he had the impertinence to ride through the streets on a fully harnessed horse, *cum vitae pudere deberet et culpae* (26.3.5). Another well-known instance is the vignette of Christian clergymen in the city, who take delight in riding in carriages, wearing exquisite clothes, and organizing banquets which outdo the tables of kings. Such people should rather imitate the ascetic life of their provincial colleagues, whose humility commends them to God *ut puros et verecundos* (27.3.15). I add one more example: Ammianus' revulsion at the treacherous murder of the Armenian king Papa. The great Fabricius Luscinus would have turned in his grave, when learning of such an atrocity (30.1.22). I am fully aware that such cases of moral indignation occur regularly in books 14–25, but in the last six books they have become both more frequent and more vehement. Not only specific actions or a particular behaviour come in for harsh disapproval, the general character of many people is pictured in brief sketches or more extensive portraits. A clear example is book 27, chapter 11, which portrays one of the most powerful men of the time, Petronius Probus.[4] The chapter is a chief witness in Barnes' complaints about Ammianus' personal dislikes: 'Ammianus mentions Probus himself only to besmirch his name'.[5] Indeed, the author evidently took much care over the portrait, alternating direct clarity with phrases of the innuendo type, as when the statement that Probus possessed huge estates all over the world is followed by *iuste an secus, non iudicioli est nostri* (27.11.1). The satirical purpose of this pseudo-naive expression cannot be overlooked, when the only other example of the diminutive is taken into account. Noting the poor literary taste of the Roman elite, Ammianus adds *quam ob causam non iudicioli est nostri* (28.4.14). All in all, the least one can say is that the reader is not invited to pass a positive judgment on Probus. In fact,

[3] Cf. Klaus Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt 1982) 122: 'In Umfang und Nachdruck übertrifft Ammians Moralismus den der früheren Historiker; aus keinem anderen antiken Geschichtswerk liesse sich eine solche Zahl abgegrenzter Werturteile zusammenstellen, wie sie den "Res Gestae" entnommen wurden.' My contention is that this has notably increased in books 26–31.

[4] *PLRE* I, Probus 5.

[5] Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London 1998) 119.

Ammianus puts the finishing touches to his portrait in a deadly manner in a passage not referred to by Barnes, 30.5.10, at the end of which he remarks that if the aspirations of the nasty *magister officiorum* Leo to become *praefectus praetorio* had been fulfilled, *administratio Probi ferebatur in caelum*.

The few examples touched upon can be easily multiplied. Taken together, all these critical descriptions and judgments of actions and characters in the end create the impression that in the third part of the extant *Res Gestae* a world is pictured in which, in any case among those in positions of power, hardly any normal person occurs. This impression is furthered by several aspects of the author's style, such as a clear tendency to reduce the persons who are described to stereotyped characters by means of adjectives and comparable qualifications. Since it is difficult to ascertain whether this tendency has significantly increased in books 26–31, specifically where negative qualifications are concerned, I shall refrain from a discussion of this phenomenon.[6]

There is, however, one other idiosyncrasy of Ammianus which deserves attention, namely his predilection for comparisons and images from the animal world. On many occasions people are compared to various animals, either in an active role, or passively, as victims. Blockley has gathered most instances in an appendix of his monograph.[7] His list contains 52 items; I can add another eleven.[8] A total of over sixty is, it would seem to me, quite remarkable, and even more worthy to be noted is the fact that slightly over half of these can be found in books 26–31. Books 20–25 have only seven cases, books 14–15 no less than fourteen. Of course, mere quantities are not convincing, they need to be regarded in their contexts; nevertheless the conspicuous presence of images from the animal world does add to the general atmosphere of what is narrated in books 26–31. John Matthews has this to say about the subject in general: 'The comparison of the behaviour of men with that of animals so enables Ammianus to underline, in a manner faithful

[6] See for this most recently Petra Riedl, *Faktoren des historischen Prozesses. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Tacitus und Ammianus Marcellinus* (Tübingen 2002) 260 ff., e.g. 'Insgesamt bleibt jedoch der Eindruck einer verringerten Individualität und zunehmenden Typisierung der geschehensbestimmenden Akteure und ihrer Merkmale…bestehen' (274).

[7] Roger C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus. A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels 1975) 183–184.

[8] *leo* 15.9.9; *pecus* 14.2.7, 16.11.9, 19.8.4, 25.8.1, 28.4.26; *ales* 15.3.9, 19.2.12; *caper* 23.6.75; *venaticia praeda* 21.7.1; *canis* 22.16.16.

both to the Classical elements in his own intellectual tradition and to the expressive conventions of his own age, the "un-human", the excessive or irrational, in the behaviour of men.'[9] This holds true for both aggressors and victims, who are treated like cattle: in 28.4.26 Cicero's *Laelius* 21.79 is quoted to illustrate that some people use their friends *tamquam pecudes* for their own profit, 29.1.40 describes the ugly situation at Antioch after the Theodorus affair in these terms: *ut pecudum ubique trucidatio cernebatur*, and Theodosius the Elder's harassing of the Isaflenses resulted in *isdem labentibus pecudum ritu* (29.5.53). The image of cattle can evidently function in various contexts. A few examples of comparisons with active animals may suffice to illustrate the function of this type of images. First some about barbarian tribes: the Austoriani, who raided the province of Tripolis, attacked their victims *ut rapaces alites…irritamento sanguinis atrocius efferatae* (28.6.13), the Huns were so ugly, *ut bipedes existimes bestias* (31.2.2), and the victorious Goths went for Adrianople, *ut bestiae sanguinis irritamento atrocius efferatae* (31.15.2).[10] However, not only barbarians behaved like beasts! Valentinian appointed the notarius Leo, *bustuarium quendam latronem Pannonium efflantem ferino rictu crudelitatem*, 'a Pannonian gangster who owed his reputation to grave-robbery, snorting forth his cruelty from the open jaws of a wild beast' (28.1.12), people shuddered at the thought of his companion Maximinus, *spiritus ferini latronem* (28.1.38). Even the highest authority was ready to act like an animal: Valentinian investigated the doings and dealings of Petronius Probus *ut sagax bestia* (30.5.10).

Such images add to the grim picture of the times of Valentinian and Valens. It was a period in which Diogenes would not have been able to confine himself to a lamp, when he went looking for a human being: he would have needed a complete radar unit.[11] When reading the last six books of the *Res Gestae*, one cannot help remembering chapters 22 and 23 of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, book 22, in which human life is painted in vivid colours: *haec ipsa vita, si vita dicenda est,*

[9] John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 258. See also R. MacMullen in section III of his paper 'Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus', *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964) 435–455, Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 108–110 and Viansino pp. XCV–XCVI of the introduction of his edition with Italian translation and notes (Milan 2003).

[10] See T.E.J. Wiedemann, 'Between Men and Beasts: Barbarians in Ammianus Marcellinus', in: I.S. Moxon, J.D. Smart and A.J. Woodman (eds.), *Past Perspectives. Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing* (Cambridge 1986) 189–201.

[11] See Diogenes Laertius 6.41.

*tot et tantis malis plena.* Augustine draws up a long list of human errors and failures,[12] concluding that, if man were allowed to live as he likes, *in haec facinora et flagitia, quae commemoravi et quae commemorare non potui, vel cuncta vel multa perveniat.* In contrast, however, to Ammianus, Augustine did not fail to add the numerous blessings with which the goodness of the Creator has provided his creation (22.24). The historian does not have such a 'compensation' at his disposal. One could object that historians, like journalists and novelists, tend to concentrate on the dark sides of human existence.[13] Seen from this angle, it would be a natural corollary of one of Ammianus' repeatedly avowed principles, namely to proceed *carptim*, 'selectively'. However, more critical readers have argued that the author was partly or even primarily inspired by the wish to contrast the reign of the Pannonian emperors with that of his main hero, Julian, to whose brief period well-nigh the entire second hexad of the *Res Gestae* is devoted. Just as the second half of book 25, in which Jovian's eight months as emperor are described, is meant to bring out the sharp contrast of Julian's leadership in the first half of the book with his successor's lack of experience and competence, books 26–31 realize such a purpose on a wider scale. Such a view is by no means unjustified. In fact, it is i.a. provoked by a telling phrase of the author himself: one of the usurper Procopius' men was more severely punished *ea re, quod divo Iuliano fuit acceptus, cuius memorandis virtutibus eius ambo fratres principes obtrectabant, nec similes eius nec suppares* (26.10.8): Valentinian and Valens used to disparage Julian's noteworthy qualities, although they were simply not in the same class themselves. Comparable statements can be found in 26.4.4, 27.1.1, 30.4.1 and 30.7.5, and apart from these one can reasonably argue that quite often the Pannonians' rule is implicitly presented as a negative foil to Julian's period.

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[12] *amor ipse tot rerum vanarum atque noxiarum et ex hoc mordaces curae, perturbationes, maerores, formidines, insana gaudia, discordiae, lites, bella, insidiae, iracundiae, inimicitiae, fallacia, adulatio, fraus, furtum, rapina, perfidia, superbia, ambitio, invidentia, homicidia, parricidia, crudelitas, saevitia, nequitia, luxuria, petulantia, inpudentia, inpudicitia, fornicationes, adulteria, incesta et contra naturam utriusque sexus tot stupra atque inmunditiae, quas turpe est etiam dicere, sacrilegia, haereses, blasphemiae, periuria, oppressiones innocentium, calumniae, circumventiones, praevaricationes, falsa testimonia, iniqua iudicia, violentiae, latrocinia et quidquid talium malorum in mentem non venit et tamen de vita ista hominum non recedit* (*C.D.* 22.22). Apart from a few examples which bear witness to a typically Christian preoccupation, it would be hard to mention a vice in this list which is not exemplified in the *Res Gestae* in general and in books 26–31 in particular.

[13] Cf. Alexander Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild im Werk Ammians* (Bonn 1965) 95: 'Ruhe, Frieden und Ordnung lassen sich vom Historiker schlecht darstellen'.

So, Ammianus' unfavourable report on the fourteen years between the death of Jovian and the aftermath of the catastrophe at Adrianople could be explained by a general historiographical tendency to focus on all that went wrong and Ammianus' personal wish to victimize Valentinian and Valens. Such an explanation is, however, at best only in part satisfactory, because it is superficial, concentrating on incidental factors instead of on the essence. In my view Ammianus' description is primarily steered by his fundamental interpretation of the period. A remarkable phrase in the negative part of Valentinian's necrology may serve to illustrate this: the emperor had an unsatiable appetite to amass huge resources, *dissimulans scire, quod sunt aliqua, quae fieri non oportet, etiam si licet* (30.8.8), 'refusing to know that there are some things which one should not do, even if one is free to do them'.[14] Here we reach the basics of civilization tout court. An even clearer statement can be found in 27.7.9. Having related some examples of Valentinian's irascibility and cruelty, Ammianus notes that some emperors do not offer any opportunity to either friends or enemies to criticize their decisions or actions in order to set them right. The exception is Julian: *emendari se, cum deviaret a fruge bona, permittens* (25.4.16).[15] He then formulates what he regards as the root of this evil in a fine phrase: *nulla autem est correctio pravitatum apud eos, qui, quod velint, effici maximae putant esse virtutis* (27.7.9), 'There is in fact no way of correcting wrongdoing in those who think that the height of virtue consists in the execution of their will' (tr. Hamilton).[16] Note the wide reach of this statement. It does not merely concern emperors or in general those in power, but everybody, and thus comes remarkably near Augustine's idea about man: *si dimittatur vivere ut velit et facere quidquid velit, in haec facinora et flagitia …perveniat* (*C.D.* 22.22). The absence of restraining mechanisms opens the door to arbitrary wilfulness. In this the historian and the bishop agree. The latter's purpose with this empirically ascertained fact is, of course, quite easy to surmise and, moreover, is made clear in the sequence of the text. But what about the historian?

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[14] I cannot agree with translations of *dissimulans scire* like 'Er tat, als wüsste er nicht' (Seyfarth), 'affecting not to know' (Hamilton), 'en feignant d'ignorer' (Sabbah). See J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XX* (Groningen 1987) 71, the note ad *dissimulasset* (20.4.8).

[15] See the commentary ad loc.

[16] Most regrettably, at this point the main manuscript V, to put it mildly, leaves us in the lurch: 'Hic locus corruptissimus est' (Wagner). However, Seyfarth's text can be

Ammianus is an average representative of 'moral' historiography, in which the prime driving force of events and long-term developments consists in the moral conduct of individuals, groups or even larger units. The divine world has its own policies, but the gods do not leave men in the dark about these: *amat enim benignitas numinis, seu quod merentur homines seu quod tangitur eorum affectione, his quoque artibus prodere, quae impendent* (21.1.9), 'by these means the benevolent deity is used to communicate future events, either because men deserve (this benevolence) or because god is moved by his affection for them'. Man, however, should heed these signs, and therefore remains responsible for his decisions and deeds. He cannot ascribe these to general trends or developments, or the winds of change.[17] Not what is in the air, but what is in man, is decisive, namely his character and, above all, his moral standard, and, the higher his place in the hierarchy of power, the more incisive is the impact of his good or bad *mores*. Here the outlines of the historian's task become visible. Above, some attention was paid to Ammianus' firm resolve not to report *minutiae*. That statement in the preface of book 26 concerns the 'what' of historiography: which subjects should be described (and judged) and which not. Now, however, we have reached a different question: why should a person engage in historiography? Are historians only or primarily driven by the unbiased passion to report the truth and to satisfy their readers' craving for reliable knowledge, and this merely for its own sake? An affirmative answer would have surprised ancient readers. Their priorities were entirely different, provided they had taken to heart what prominent historians had taught them, namely that the goal of historiography does not lie within itself. On the contrary, it should benefit its readers, or perhaps rather its users. In his well-known monograph Lucian has worded it with succinct clarity: ἓν γὰρ ἔργον ἱστορίας καὶ τέλος, τὸ χρήσιμον (*Hist. Conscr.* 9).[18] Livy visualized this principle in his well-known phrase *hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias,*

regarded as plausible and, in any case, what Ammianus wanted to express, is reasonably clear.

[17] Cf. Demandt, *Zeitkritik und Geschichtsbild*, 13: 'Ammian kritisiert nie Erscheinungen, die durch die Zeit im Sinne eines überpersönlichen Zeitgeistes verursacht worden waren…Für ihn tragen die Menschen persönlich die Verantwortung für alles Geschehen.' There is, so to speak, a historical causality in the actions of individuals.

[18] See for a lucid treatment of the matter C.M.J. Sicking, 'Lucian, Cicero and Historiography', in: Idem, *Distant Companions* (Leiden 1998) 158–167.

*inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod vites* (*Praef.* 10). As the word *documentum* indicates, history teaches its readers to improve their moral conduct and standards.[19] The question arises whether similar views were held in Late Antiquity. This was indeed the case. We find it clearly expressed in an unexpected place, the *Life of the three Gordians* in the *Historia Augusta*. Having denounced a certain Cordus' ridiculous tendency to report utterly unimportant details of court life, the author then continues with *quorum etiam scientia nulli rei prodest, si quidem ea debeant in historia poni ab historiografis, quae aut fugienda sint aut sequenda* (*Gd* 21.4).[20] This may be parodic, but even that would show that the principle had not been forgotten. Moreover, the direct reason of the statement is the rejection of all passion for details, which is also a historiographical principle. An explicit statement about the benefits of history cannot be found in the extant *Res Gestae*. It may well have been part of the preface of the entire work. However, all speculation about a text which we do not have at our disposal is fruitless. It is far more useful to note that for Ammianus the past is a storehouse of models for good conduct. Julian is a good example: he matched Marcus Aurelius, *ad cuius aemulationem actus suos effingebat et mores* (16.1.4). He was able to do this, because he was *antiquitatum peritus*, 'well-read in ancient history' (23.5.21). Constantius used to say that he did his best to model his life *ad aemulationem civilium principum* (15.1.3), but the facts contradicted this resolve. He even surpassed wicked emperors like Caligula, Domitian and Commodus, *quorum aemulatus saevitiam* he began his rule with murdering a number of relatives (21.16.8). Valentinian too excelled in cruelty, although he had ample opportunity to know better: *atquin potuit exempla multa contueri maiorum et imitari peregrina atque interna humanitatis et pietatis, quas sapientes consanguineas virtutum esse definiunt bonas* (30.8.4).[21] Having described two

[19] Tacitus traces his own course of (moral) historiography: his prime objective is commemoration, as has been convincingly shown by T.J. Luce, 'Tacitus on "History's Highest Function": *praecipuum munus annalium* (Ann. 3.65)', *ANRW* 33.4 (1991) 2904–2927. The title of this contribution refers to *praecipuum munus annalium reor ne virtutes sileantur utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit* (*Ann.* 3.65.2). Luce dwells especially on the *ut*-clause: 'History as a Deterrent'. The historian should see to it that wicked men, a fortiori a tyrant, cannot get away with their heinous deeds, for history 'is the one thing he is unable to control'. No doubt Tacitus differs from Livy, but for both historiography has objectives outside itself.

[20] Chastagnol notes ad loc.: 'Sans doute une réminiscence de Tite-Live, Préface 10.'

[21] H. Tränkle, 'Ammianus Marcellinus als römischer Geschichtsschreiber', *Antike & Abendland* 11 (1962) 21–33 notes the similarity to Livy, *Praef.* 10 in the sequence *contueri …imitari* (24).

of these many examples, Ammianus then suggests that Valentinian had no knowledge of such material: *haec forsitan Valentinianus ignorans* (30.8.6). Obviously to his detriment the emperor had been poorly educated in ancient history. This was the trouble with his brother too: *subagreste ingenium nullius vetustatis lectionibus expolitum* (30.4.2). Remarkably, in spite of the bleak character of the Pannonian period, it did produce some good examples. After the registration of Valentinian's *vitia* the author turns to *eius actus sequendos recte sentientibus et probandos* (30.9.1). Even Valens did some good: *haec bonis omnibus aemulanda sunt, ut existimo* (31.14.4). A certain Eupraxius[22] *multa et prudentibus aemulanda bonae fiduciae reliquit exempla* (27.6.14).

The quoted instances may have shown that correct and salutary conduct, especially, but not only, of emperors, can result from serious attention to models of the past. In his explicit statements Ammianus focuses almost exclusively on good examples, which should be followed, but this does not mean that the avoidance of bad examples is absent from his mind. Nevertheless here a certain reserve is at work. To make this clear, I first turn to a phrase in 22.4.2, in a passage on the court officials (*palatini*). The majority of these men nursed all the vices one can think of, *ita, ut rem publicam infecerint cupiditatibus pravis plusque exemplis quam peccandi licentia laederent multos*. So rather than by their unbridled wrongdoing itself they caused havoc by their example. As Lindenbrog summarized it long ago: 'plusque exemplo quam peccato nocent'. He also referred to Cicero, *De legibus* 3.30–32, a passage which may have inspired Ammianus. The second half of §31 deserves to be quoted:

> *Nec enim tantum mali est peccare principes (quamquam est magnum hoc per se ipsum malum) quantum illud quod permulti imitatores principum existunt. Nam licet videre, si velis replicare memoriam temporum, qualescumque summi civitatis viri fuerint, talem civitatem fuisse; quaecumque mutatio morum in principibus extiterit, eandem in populo secutam.*[23]

These thoughts help considerably to understand the remarkable reflections at the beginning of book 28. The full text, with Hamilton's translation, is printed in the Appendix. The reflections introduce the description of the horrific series of lawsuits at Rome from 368 onward.[24]

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[22] *PLRE* I, Flavius Eupraxius.

[23] See also Dyck's commentary ad loc. for some interesting parallels.

[24] See Den Hengst pp. 166–167 in this volume on the problematical relation between chapters 1 and 4 of book 28.

Ammianus expresses his reluctancy to deal with these unsavoury matters in a quite complicated way. He begins with an *utinam*-clause, which occurs rarely in his work.[25] Such clauses express regret that something has (not) happened in the past: the terrible events were in fact not 'buried in total oblivion'. Then he continues with *ne forte*, which occurs only here in the *Res Gestae*, and which expresses that one wants to prevent something that might happen to be wished or done by someone else.[26] Oblivion would have brought about that people did not attempt crimes of the same gravity (*paria*), which in their turn were to cause more harm by the examples set in this entire domain (*generalibus*) than by specific offences. So there is imitation of evil in two phases: first *paria temptentur*, next *exemplis*. In the case of utter oblivion such evil conduct would not have ensued nor would the historian have been placed in a dilemma whether to report this bloody series of events (*hoc textu cruento gestorum*) or not. He was quite justified in fearing (*iustus…metus*) such a task, for a variety of reasons (*multa reputantem et varia*). Yet he feels more confident in view of the improved situation of his time and therefore he will, according to his custom, deal selectively with some noteworthy facts. Until further notice I take this long-winded statement to mean or at least to imply that the author tends to recoil from the danger that his narrative of wicked acts was not going to deter people from imitation, but to stimulate them to do just that. There is, however, in the better climate in which he is now writing a chance that it will not turn out that bad. There remained, however, still another reason to fear, something which happened to another author in the distant past, and he is not loath to elucidate this in brief terms (*docere succincte*). Ammianus has first to summarize the capture of Miletus in 494 BC. Those who assume the author's familiarity with Herodotus will be disappointed, since the latter's report in 6.18–20 does not contain anything about a collective suicide of the inhabitants. Neither does the description of the incident in the theatre which was at stake bear much likeness with Herodotus 6.21, where it is told that the tragedian was heavily fined, but not that this was decided because of complaints by the audience. One could just as well assume that it was the authorities who were angry at Phryn-

[25] In all there are six instances: one in a speech of Constantius (21.13.12), the other five authorial: 14.11.25, 28.1.1, 28.4.3, 29.2.13, 30.5.4. In the case of 29.2.13, Sabbah (in n. 79 in the Budé edition) suggests the possibility of a marginal remark, which has found its way into the text.

[26] Some scholars interpret the *ne forte*-clause as a direct wish of the author. I regard this as improbable, but it is not very important for my argument.

ichus' causing such strong emotions: ἐς δάκρυά τε ἔπεσε τὸ θέητρον. An active role of the audience in the tragedian's plight is more clearly visible in Aelianus' brief section on the incident: δακρύσαντες ἐξέβαλον (*VH* 13.17).[27] However, be all this as it may, for our theme the only thing that matters is what Ammianus has actually written. The first aspect to draw our attention is the fact that he compares himself and his work to a poet and his productions. If anything, this warns us not to speak about ancient historiography in "scientific" terms. Secondly, it is worth to be noted that Ammianus pulls out quite a few stylistic stops to define Phrynichus' feat. This is only sensible, if we assume that the historian regards himself as living up to such standards too. Moreover, the comparison only functions, if Roman society is implicitly accused of having failed to support those who were in trouble, just like the Athenians in their relation to their colony Miletus (*nullis auctorum adminiculis fulta*). What about the comparison of the objections made to Phrynichus and Ammianus respectively? The Athenians felt offended when they realized that the tragedy had not been staged *consolandi gratia, sed probrose monendi.* I must admit not to feel at ease with *consolandi*, which in itself seems a plausible correction of V's *consulandi.* The verb *consolari*, however, does not occur elsewhere in the extant *Res Gestae*, and one fails to understand how the pathetic staging of the Milesian catastrophe could have 'comforted' the audience.[28] However, the tertium comparationis cannot be found in the negative half of the phrase, but in the positive one: Ammianus means to say that his critical readers will conclude that his ornate report was written *probrose monendi gratia*, 'to reproach and warn them'. In this conclusion they would have been entirely right: it certainly was the historian's purpose to show that many victims of injustice at Rome had been deprived of any help of their friends, an outrage which deserved to be made public as a warning for the future.

So the potential reactions to the critical manner in which Ammianus will describe recent events shows him being conscious of the hazards of his project. On the one hand he had to face the fact that his descrip-

[27] See for a discussion of the (alleged) political aspects G. Freymuth, 'Zur Μιλήτου ἅλωσις des Phrynichus', *Philologus* 99 (1955) 51–69.

[28] The contrast between *monere* and *consolari* occurs twice in Cicero's letters: *Fam.* 4.8.1 and 6.20.1 (*ut antea consolabar, hoc tempore monebo*). I wonder whether *conciliandi* could be a plausible emendation. The verb occurs three times in the *Res Gestae*, twice with the meaning 'to render favourably disposed' (*OLD* s.v. 2): 25.3.22, 28.4.32. One might regard it as tallying with *paulisperque iucunde auditus* in the immediately preceding context.

tions of unjust and wicked actions would attract imitators in the wrong sense, on the other that his readership, like Phrynichus' audience nearly nine centuries ago, would take offence at his protreptical historiography. Both reactions were more probable in the case of recent history, in which the readers were somehow personally involved. This differs markedly from his irritation at the expected reactions of hairsplitters complaining about the absence of historical details of minute importance in 26.1.1. That cannot have been a truly fundamental problem, in sharp contrast to the moral issues which we meet in 28.1.1–4.[29]

All this has a wider significance, involving the entire project of the *Res Gestae*. For clarity's sake I shall deal with the subject in a different manner, by way of a fictitious interview with the author, in which some of his basic principles are brought out.

In the text of the interview **R** denotes a (Roman) reader, **A** the author (or Ammianus). Here and there a phrase has been subtitled.

**R** I read your history of the Pannonian emperors with great interest. Your penetrating description of persons and events compels admiration. Some of your phrases, like *omnes ea tempestate velut in Cimmeriis tenebris reptabamus* (and the immediate sequel of these words in 29.2.4), keep lingering in my mind. I also much appreciate your focusing on what was truly important in the period.

**A** Thank you for these kind words. I am glad that my selection of the highlights has convinced you. Too many ignorant readers are bothering me with their regret about the absence of a particular trivial detail.

**R** Nevertheless, do you not fear that the gloomy picture which you have so skilfully contrived will prove counterproductive, in that your readers may either be driven to despondency and despair or conclude

[29] See also the analysis in Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae (Paris 1978) 109–110. I am, however, not convinced that it is correct to say: 'Ammien met en scène le conflit intemporel de l'obligation scientifique et de l'obligation morale' (109). The term 'scientifique' seems anachronistic and, moreover, the 'moral' character of historiography requires strict observance of the truth. I now quote Lucian's statement more fully than above: ἓν γὰρ ἔργον ἱστορίας καὶ τέλος, τὸ χρήσιμον, ὅπερ ἐκ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς μόνου συνάγεται. See Sicking, 'Lucian, Cicero and Historiography', 161. Cf. also E. Herkommer, *Die Topoi in den Proömien der römische Geschichtswerke* (Diss. Tübingen 1968) 137, who i.a. quotes Plb. 1.14.6: ἐξ ἱστορίας ἀναιρεθείσης τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται διήγημα.

that cruelty and injustice are profitable, and therefore decide to imitate such practices?

**A** I agree that my style of historiography has some hazards, but…

**R** Would it not have been more practical to heed the warning of one of your compatriots, the historian Polybius? Some of your readers assume that you know his work well and even follow in his footsteps. Criticizing the historian Phylarchus, Polybius argued that instead of enumerating all the errors committed by people, it is far better τὰ καλὰ καὶ δίκαια τῶν ἔργων ἐπισημαίνεσθαι ('to indicate the fine and just actions', 2.61.3). This will stimulate the readers πρὸς ἀληθινῶν πραγμάτων καὶ βεβαίων κοινωνίαν (2.61.11).[30]

**A** Yes, I have heard about Polybius. You may have noticed, however, that I do not entirely refrain from reporting such acts, even in the necrologies of the two Pannonian emperors. My problem is, however, that, having decided to concentrate on the important events and developments, which, of course, mainly took place in high circles, admirable feats proved deplorably rare. Since I wanted to offer the reader a responsible interpretation of the period, my picture perforce worked out as it did. The well-nigh systematic violation of justice is exasperating. I also remind you that my great predecessor Tacitus explicitly defended his reports on wicked acts as a method of deterring people from performing such acts. Moreover, I add that I have unambiguously condemned the imitation of evil conduct by quoting, in your language, my compatriot Demosthenes: *numquam similitudine aut impunitate alterius criminis diluitur id, quod contra ac liceat arguitur factum* (30.1.23).

**R** Do you nurse any hopes of a better future?

**A** As you may remember, I have expressed some confidence in the present period, so that…

**R** You mean that casual remark about the *praesentis temporis modestia* at the beginning of book 28? I have been discussing these words with some of my friends and we could not even agree what you are precisely meaning to say there. In any case this cannot be sufficient for true optimism.

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[30] Walbank's commentary ad loc. (vol. 1, 267) renders: 'to share the enterprises of an honourable and well established state'.

**A** Let me try a different approach and quote another countryman of mine. You are obviously familiar with the Greek language. In his *Cyropaedia*, which I regard as an admirable guide for rulers, Xenophon has this to say: ὁποῖοί τινες γὰρ ἂν οἱ προστάται ὦσι, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ὑπ' αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ γίγνονται ('for whatever the character of the rulers is, such also that of the people under them for the most part becomes'; 8.8.5, tr. Miller).

**R** I remember a similar phrase in Cicero: *quales in re publica principes essent, tales reliquos solere esse cives* (*Fam.* 1.9.12). He ascribes the thought to Plato.

**A** Excellent! Now, in my view Julian has clearly demonstrated the truth of this in a very positive manner. I have not kept silent about some flaws in his character and a number of mistaken decisions, but his general conduct had a most salutary impact on his subordinates, both in the military and the civil sphere. This conduct was guided by his fundamental convictions, which he explains himself in his death-bed speech.

**R** But his reign was very short and after him…

**A** Apart from the fact that you tend to overlook his fine feats as a Caesar in Gaul from 355 onward, precisely this brevity shows how rapidly things can improve under a good leadership.

**R** But who is going to give us a good leader? Do you expect Fortuna to do the trick?

**A** Her whims are intangible for a historian. I must admit that at times, when I fail to understand the course of events, I take refuge with her, assuming that she is responsible. However, those readers who conclude that this is merely a narrative device borrowed from the historiographical tradition are mistaken.[31] I do regard Fortuna as a superhuman power, but her actions cannot be predicted nor fully understood.

**R** So Fortuna can only inspire some vague hope. Could you name something more reliable?

[31] Obviously, these readers are the precursors of the views expressed by Matthews on pp. 427–428 of his *The Roman Empire*.

**A** I am convinced that, although at times quite late, Iustitia will always bring about compensation for evil deeds.

**R** Do you refer to Iustitia's daughter Adrastia or Nemesis, about whom you wrote that intricate theological passage in book 14? But in that case you wrote *utinam semper*, because you obviously doubted her consistency.

**A** I have changed my mind, as you have been able to read. Twice I mention Iustitia's always watching eye (28.6.25 and 29.2.20) and in 30.2.9 I express myself even clearer: *sempiternus vindicavit Iustitiae vigor, aliquotiens serus, sed scrupulosus quaesitor gestorum recte vel secus*.

**R** Scant consolation indeed! How long shall we have to wait before these dreadful Gothic invaders are put in their place?

**A** I understand your impatience. This disaster near Adrianople was really horrible, but you will have seen my review of Roman calamities in the past in 31.5.11–17. We always overcame these bad moments by the united efforts of all Romans.

**R** Exactly this is lacking nowadays. Moreover, your own verdict, *numquam pensabilia damna, quae magno rebus stetere Romanis* (31.13.11), eloquently contradicts your optimism.

**A** I wrote these words in a moment of despondency, but I am now sure that we will survive. Rome is eternal.

**R** Do you really believe this? I thought that you repeatedly used this traditional concept in a merely ornamental sense.

**A** 'Belief' should be left to the Christians, who dream about heaven descending on earth at the end of history. We both know that history will never end, and I am firmly convinced that Rome will remain alive forever.

**R** But, as you said yourself in your comparison of Rome's history with the life of an individual (14.6.3–6), Rome is now old and, I am afraid, near its decline and fall.

**A** You have evidently forgotten the view which I also expressed in that passage. I said there that Rome has entrusted the guardianship of her possessions to the Caesares.

**R** So everything depends on their just and wise leadership. The experiences which you describe are not particularly encouraging.

**A** Except for Julian. His reign has shown that we do not need the leadership of a flawless and almost superhuman being. A normal person with the talents required for his various tasks and duties and, above all, with sound principles concerning the scrupulous maintenance of justice will suffice.

**R** Here we seem to restart our discussion. So I thank you for graciously allowing me, a civil servant and a Roman, to ask some impertinent questions. May I conclude by saying that I am in any case convinced of the perpetuity of your *Res Gestae*?

*Appendix*

Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 28.1.1–4:

**1** Dum apud Persas, ut supra narravimus, perfidia regis motus agitat insperatos et in eois tractibus bella rediviva consurgunt, anno sexto decimo et eo diutius post Nepotiani exitium saeviens per urbem aeternam urebat cuncta Bellona ex primordiis minimis ad clades excita luctuosas, quas obliterasset utinam iuge silentium, ne forte paria quandoque temptentur plus exemplis generalibus nocitura quam delictis. **2** ac licet ab hoc textu cruento gestorum exquisite narrando iustus me retraheret metus multa reputantem et varia, tamen praesentis temporis modestia fretus carptim, ut quaeque memoria digna sunt, explanabo, nec pigebit quid ex his, quae apud veteres acciderunt, timuerim docere succincte. **3** bello Medico primo, cum diripuissent Asiam Persae, obsidentes Miletum molibus magnis minantesque defensoribus cruciabiles neces iniecere clausis necessitatem, ut omnes magnitudine malorum afflicti peremptis caritatibus propriis proiectoque in ignem mobili censu arsuros se certatim congererent in communem pereuntis patriae rogum. **4** hoc argumentum paulo postea digestum tumore tragico Phrynichus in theatrum induxerat Athenarum paulisperque iucunde auditus, cum coturnatius stilus procederet lacrimosus, indignatione damnatus est populi arbitrati non consolandi gratia, sed probrose monendi, quae pertulerat amabilis civitas nullis auctorum adminiculis fulta, hos quoque dolores scaenicis adnumerasse fabulis insolenter. Erat enim Atheniensium colonia Miletus deducta inter Ionas alios per Nileum filium Codri, qui fertur pro patria bello se Dorico devovisse. Sed ad proposita veniamus.

While in Persia, as I have described above, the bad faith of the king was causing unexpected trouble, and hostilities were being renewed on the eastern front, at Rome, rather more than sixteen years after the death of Nepotian, Bellona (the goddess of war) was raging through the Eternal City and setting it ablaze. Small beginnings culminated in fearful disasters, which one could wish buried in total oblivion. I pray that there may be no such outrages hereafter to do more harm by the example they set than by their actual effects. I reflected deeply on the various circumstances, and felt that I had good grounds for fearing the consequences if I gave a minute account of this bloody business, but the better moral climate that now prevails encourages me to touch on the

things worth recording. I do not, however, feel at all reluctant to explain briefly the episode in ancient history which caused me alarm.

In the first war against the Medes, the Persians after seizing Asia laid siege to Miletus in overwhelming strength. The besieged were threatened with an agonizing death and brought to such a pass by their miseries that they killed their nearest and dearest, made a bonfire of their movables, and vied with one another in their haste to consign themselves to the flames and perish on the common pyre of their country. Soon afterwards Phrynichus used this disaster as the plot of a tragedy, and produced it on the stage at Athens. At first it was well received by the audience, but as the sad story unfolded in high tragic style their indignation was aroused and they punished the author, whose object, they thought, was not to console but to reproach. A lovely city had perished without any help from its founders, and Phrynichus had had the bad taste to make a stage play of its sufferings. Miletus was a colony of Athens, founded with other Ionian cities by Nileus, son of Codrus. (Codrus is said to have laid down his life for his country in war with the Dorians.)

But let me come to my subject.

(tr. Walter Hamilton)

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